

COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIAN COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

ADVANCE

FALL 2024

MAGAZINE

FINDING TRUE NORTH

NAVIGATING SEASONS OF CHANGE IN CHRISTIAN HIGHER ED

Shirley,
A Lasting Legacy
p. 16

Steering Through the
Headwinds
p. 22

Navigating AI in Christian
Higher Education
p. 28

THE LEADING VOICE OF CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

CCCCU Upcoming Events

2025

Presidents Conference

Washington, D.C. | January 28 - 31



Multi-Academic Conferences I & II

Atlanta, Georgia | February 24 - 28

Advancing Women In Leadership (AWIL) Conference

Nashville, Tennessee | March 10



2026

International Forum and

Celebration of CCCU's 50th Anniversary

Dallas, Texas | January 29 - February 1



Learn more at cccu.org/events

FROM THE PRESIDENT | DAVID A. HOAG, PH.D.

Meet President David A. Hoag



Christian higher education is in my DNA. At Christian colleges and universities, we are in the business of transformation, not transaction. Throughout my life, Christian higher education has transformed me—as a student, as a professional, as a leader, and especially as a husband and father.

I met my wife, Joanna, when we were both students at Asbury College, now Asbury University. From Asbury, I embarked on my professional journey in higher education, which carried me from the admissions office and then advancement at Asbury to Greenville University, Trinity International University, and finally Warner University, where I served as president from 2016-24. In every step along this winding road, God was preparing me for this: to become the eighth president of the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities, where I am blessed to advance the life-transforming work of Christian higher education that takes place on your campuses day in and day out.

This issue of *ADVANCE* delves into change: changes in leadership, in technology, and in our culture. During the past decade under President Shirley Hoogstra's leadership, the CCCU served Christian higher education in a rapidly changing world. As just one example, in 2015 *Obergefell v. Hodges* reshaped the American legal landscape, and subsequent years have seen increased challenges to religious liberty in higher education, from cultural issues to accreditation and from healthcare to hiring practices. Through it all, President Hoogstra positioned the CCCU as a staunch defender of Christian colleges and universities, protecting religious freedom in the courts, Congress, and the executive branch. (For more on other key arenas of the CCCU's work during President Hoogstra's tenure, see pgs. 16-21 and 22-27).

As we celebrate that far-reaching legacy, we also embrace the future. The CCCU is a member-services organization, which means that we hold ourselves in a responsive posture. Underlying all the work of the CCCU are core, bedrock principles: a commitment to biblical truth and faith in the Lord. On top of that solid foundation, we build with changeable clay, which we can mold and reform to meet the ever-evolving needs of our member institutions. Changes that shape the future of higher education will by necessity shape the work of the CCCU.

When I look to the horizon and chart a course for the CCCU, three key priorities guide our path forward: 1) strengthening membership, 2) engaging faculty in faith-learning integration and developing leaders for the future, and 3) advocacy.

Underlying all the work of the CCCU are core, bedrock principles: a commitment to biblical truth and faith in the Lord.

We will strengthen our membership by gaining new members and retaining our existing 180+ member institutions, both by providing invaluable services and helping those institutions who are struggling to be viable. We will continue to support robust professional development for developing leaders at Christian colleges and universities, while also facilitating the thoughtful integration of faith and learning—which lies at the very heart of Christian higher education. And we will continue to serve as the unified voice of Christ-centered colleges and universities through our advocacy work, ensuring that our member institutions can faithfully transform students' hearts, souls, and minds for generations to come.

No matter what change comes our way, the future of Christian higher education shines bright, for we know our true north: Jesus Christ, who "is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). May our hope in God cast out fear and dispel doubt; may His wisdom, grace, and peace guide our hands as we shape a great and beautiful future. 🙏

4
FROM THE CHIEF
COMMUNICATIONS
OFFICER
Dr. Amanda Staggenborg

6
AROUND THE COUNCIL
News from the CCCU

8
THE STATE OF
COMPUTER SCIENCE
DEGREES
By the Numbers

10
SCHOLARSHIP VS.
ADMINISTRATION
Dr. Stanley P. Rosenberg

12
HUNTER v.
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
By Dr. Amanda
Staggenborg

48
THE LAST WORD
Dr. David A. Hoag

16 SHIRLEY A Lasting Legacy

Celebrating a decade spent
in service to Christian higher
education.

Dr. Amanda Staggenborg
Dr. Nathan O. Hatch



22 STEERING THROUGH THE HEADWINDS

Reflections on the past, insights
for the future.

Dr. David Hoag
Dr. Jay Barnes
Dr. Dan Boone
Dr. Shirley Mullen
Dr. Chip Pollard
Dr. David Wright



28 NAVIGATING AI IN CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

A conversation about the
role and impact of artificial
intelligence at Christian colleges
and universities.

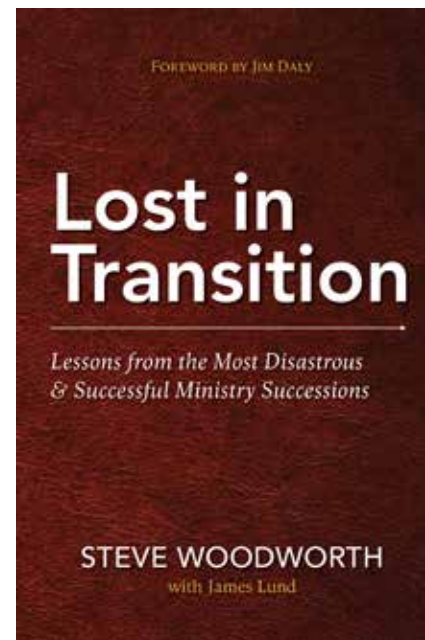
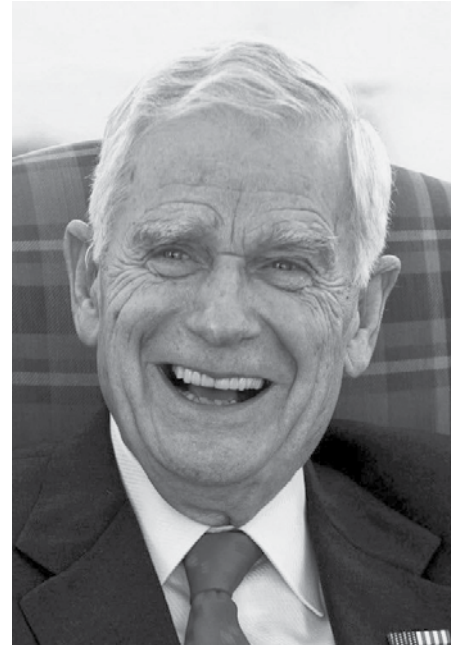
Dr. Joy Buchanan
Dr. Andrew Lang
Dr. David Bourgeois
Dr. Stan Rosenberg



36 HONORING THE LEGACY OF SENATOR HATFIELD

How a senator's legacy lives on
in Christian higher education
through the Center for Public
Justice's Hatfield Prize.

Jacqueline Isaacs
Jackson Boone
Dr. Colby Humphrey
Megan Brock
Dr. Lisa Hosack
Addison Ream
Dr. Keith L. Johnson



44 LOST IN TRANSITION

A book review.

Dr. Paul Percy

THE COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIAN COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES (CCCU)

is a higher education association of more than 180 Christian institutions around the world. Since 1976, the CCCU has served as the leading voice of Christian higher education. With campuses across the globe, including more than 150 in the U.S. and Canada and more than 30 from an additional 19 countries, CCCU institutions are accredited, comprehensive colleges and universities whose missions are Christ-centered and rooted in the historic Christian faith.

THE MISSION OF THE CCCU is to advance the cause of Christ-centered higher education throughout the world.

DISTRIBUTION

Advance is published each year in the fall and spring and is mailed to members, affiliates, and friends of the CCCU. It is also available online at www.cccu.org/magazine. Direct questions and letters to the editor to editor@cccu.org.

ADVERTISING

Advance accepts advertising from organizations that serve the students, faculty, or administration of our campuses. For more information and/or to receive a CCCU Media Kit, please email advertising@cccu.org.

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Letter from the Chief Communications Officer



Once heard someone say that “Our God is a seasonal God.”

By that, they meant that His divine presence stays steadfast throughout our life transitions. He is there for our joys and struggles, guiding us through the personal and professional chapters that we begin and end. The Bible references seasons frequently, reminding us that all is done in God’s perfect timing. For example, Daniel 2:21 tells us, “He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding.”

Through any season, our journey is grounded in faith. Each step carries meaning as we walk with Jesus towards a purposeful life. We may not understand how or why we are called to a decision, a path, or a role, but everything is planned according to God’s unique and perfect time for each of us.

One of the divinely beautiful ways we experience the seasons is the sense of completeness as one season ends and hopeful anticipation as another begins. As we embark on a new season of leadership at the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities, we are filled with hope and inspiration, adapting to new opportunities and facing rising challenges while we hold firmly to God’s truth.

In this issue of *ADVANCE*, we honor President Shirley Hoogstra’s decade of leadership and faithfulness to the CCCU. Her mosaic of contributions protected religious liberty, strengthened relationships, and rooted the academic and cultural significance of Christian higher education for generations to come. We also welcome President David A. Hoag, who begins his season as the eighth president of the CCCU. As he navigates the complex waters of cultural and societal division, he will lean on his vast experience in Christian higher education, pointed toward true north by the Gospel.

This issue also features an interview with the CCCU board chairs (Drs. Dan Boone, David Wright, Shirley Mullen, Jay Barnes, and Chip Pollard) who served throughout the last decade, offering reflections

on past challenges and insights for the future. In addition, you will find a summary of key moments from the *Hunter v. Department of Education* lawsuit (from both the district and appeals courts). We feature an article by Dr. Stan Rosenberg discussing the sometimes-conflicting roles of research and administration. Meanwhile, Dr. Rosenberg’s interview with Dr. Joy Buchanan (Samford University), Dr. Andrew Lang (Oral Roberts University), and Dr. David Bourgeois (Biola University) about the infusion of AI in the workflow of higher education presents opportunities in a new chapter of technology.

We may not understand how or why we are called to a decision, a path, or a role, but everything is planned according to God's unique and perfect time for each of us.

Finally, Dr. Paul Percy reviews Steve Woodworth’s guide to ministry leadership transitions in his new book, *Lost in Transition: Lessons from the Most Disastrous & Successful Ministry Successions*. As we examine changes in leadership, culture, technology, and the law, we are constantly reminded that every season has its purpose.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 tells us that, “[God] has made everything beautiful in its time.” As we enter this new season at the CCCU, let us reflect with a collective vision and an open heart to embrace God’s plan for a hopeful journey ahead. 🙌

DR. AMANDA STAGGENBORG is the chief communications officer for the CCCU.

Congratulations

to CCCU’s new CEO, Dr. David Hoag, whose fundraising skills are strengthened by the Certificate in Fund Raising Management (CFRM) that he earned from The Fund Raising School.



Our alumni report that they raise more money and gain greater confidence to fundraise after attending The Fund Raising School.

Courses are offered in-person and online, and we can bring these courses directly to your fundraising team. The Fund Raising School also can design courses tailored to your specific needs through our custom training program, including curriculum designed specifically for presidents, deans, and other senior-level leaders.

“I earned a certificate in fundraising management through The Fund Raising School early in my advancement career. That experience played a vital role in preparing me for the work I have done, and continue to do, on behalf of Christian higher education.”

—DR. DAVID HOAG



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PRESIDENTIAL CHANGES

The following institutions have experienced presidential transitions since September 2023. Campuses that currently have interim presidents are not included.

Africa International University

(Nairobi, Kenya)
Nelson Ndonga Makanda, January 2024

Ambrose University

(Calgary, AB, Canada)
Bryce Ashlin-Mayo, May 2024

Avondale University

(Cooranbong, NSW, Australia)
Malcolm Coulson, July 2024

Bluefield University

(Bluefield, VA)
Steve Peterson, August 2024

Calvin University

(Grand Rapids, MI)
Greg Elzinga, October 2024

Christ's College Taipei

(New Taipei City, Taiwan)
Joseph Che, May 2024

Johnson University

(Knoxville, TN)
Daniel Overdorf, July 2024

King University

(Bristol, TN)
Andrew Tooley, August 2024

Milligan University

(Johnson City, TN)
Stephen Waers, August 2024

Mount Vernon Nazarene University

(Mount Vernon, OH)
Carson D. Castleman, October 2023

Point Loma Nazarene University

(San Diego, CA)
Kerry Fulcher, August 2024

The King's University

(Southlake, TX)
Irin Fambro, January 2024

Tokyo Christian University

(Inzai, Japan)
Motoaki Shinohara, August 2024

Trinity International University

(Deerfield, IL)
Kevin Kompelien, April 2024

Walla Walla University

(College Place, WA)
Alex Bryan, July 2024

Wayland Baptist University

(Plainview, TX)
Donna R. Hedgepath, July 2024

THE CCCU AWARDS \$70,000 IN FACULTY RESEARCH GRANTS

In September, the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities announced the 2024 recipients of its annual Networking Grants, awarded to support high-quality, collaborative Christian scholarship that brings Christian voices into contemporary academic conversations. A total of \$70,000 was awarded to four research teams representing 15 different institutions from around the world.

The Networking Grants for Christian Scholars program was established more than two decades ago through the ongoing generosity of Walter and Darlene Hansen, and in 2020, a generous gift from the Christian Community Credit Union expanded the size of the grants. Each year, the CCCU awards Networking Grants to scholars whose work satisfies two key criteria: 1) the work is significantly informed by Christian practices, perspectives, and purposes, and 2) the work demonstrates the potential for dissemination in the larger academy.

“The CCCU is blessed to support faculty at our member institutions, who make an incredible impact both by faithfully teaching generations of students and by bringing the crucial lens of faith to academic research,” said CCCU President David Hoag, Ph.D. “We are grateful to the two funders of the Networking Grants program and to all the dedicated, expert faculty members who applied for this year’s grants.”

This year, the CCCU awarded Networking Grants to four distinct research teams composed of 23 scholars, representing 14 CCCU colleges or universities and one additional institution. These institutions span a wide geographical area, including eight different U.S. states and four different countries.

“The selection committee was impressed by the broad range of competitive proposals, showcasing the in-depth, timely work and meaningful collaboration that takes place within Christian institutions of higher education,” said Dr. Stanley P. Rosenberg, vice president for research and scholarship at the CCCU and executive director of Scholarship & Christianity in Oxford (SCIO). “Scholarship is a vital component of our engagement with and service to the broader world, and the selected projects promise to bring a vital Christ-centered lens to significant scholarly conversations.”

Grant-funded projects are divided into two categories: Initiative Grants provide up to \$30,000 in funding over three years for teams implementing research projects, and Planning Grants provide up to \$5,000 in funding over one year for teams setting out to plan research projects.

For more information on the CCCU’s Networking Grants for Christian Scholars program, scan the QR code below.



THE STATE OF COMPUTER SCIENCE DEGREES

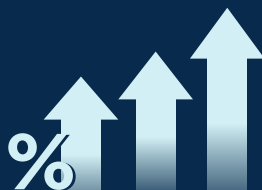
CHANGE IN COMPUTER SCIENCE DEGREES AT CCCU INSTITUTIONS

TOTAL COMPUTER INFO SCIENCE DEGREES

2012-13



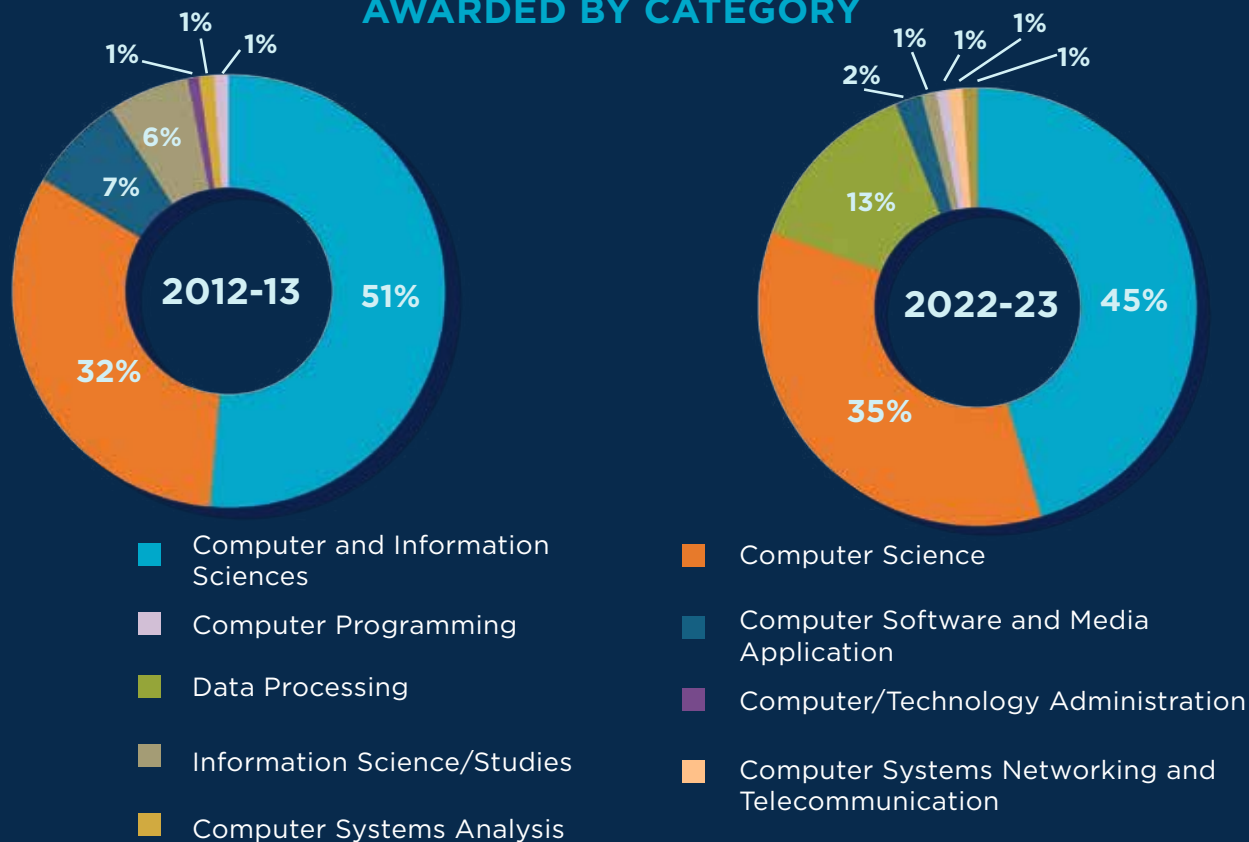
2022-23



PERCENTAGE OF ALL COMPUTER INFO SCIENCE DEGREES OUT OF ALL STEM DEGREES AWARDED AT CCCU INSTITUTIONS: **2012-13 14%** **2022-23 20%**

Computer info science degrees increased 94% from 2012-13 to 2022-23. STEM degrees increased 34% during the same period of time.

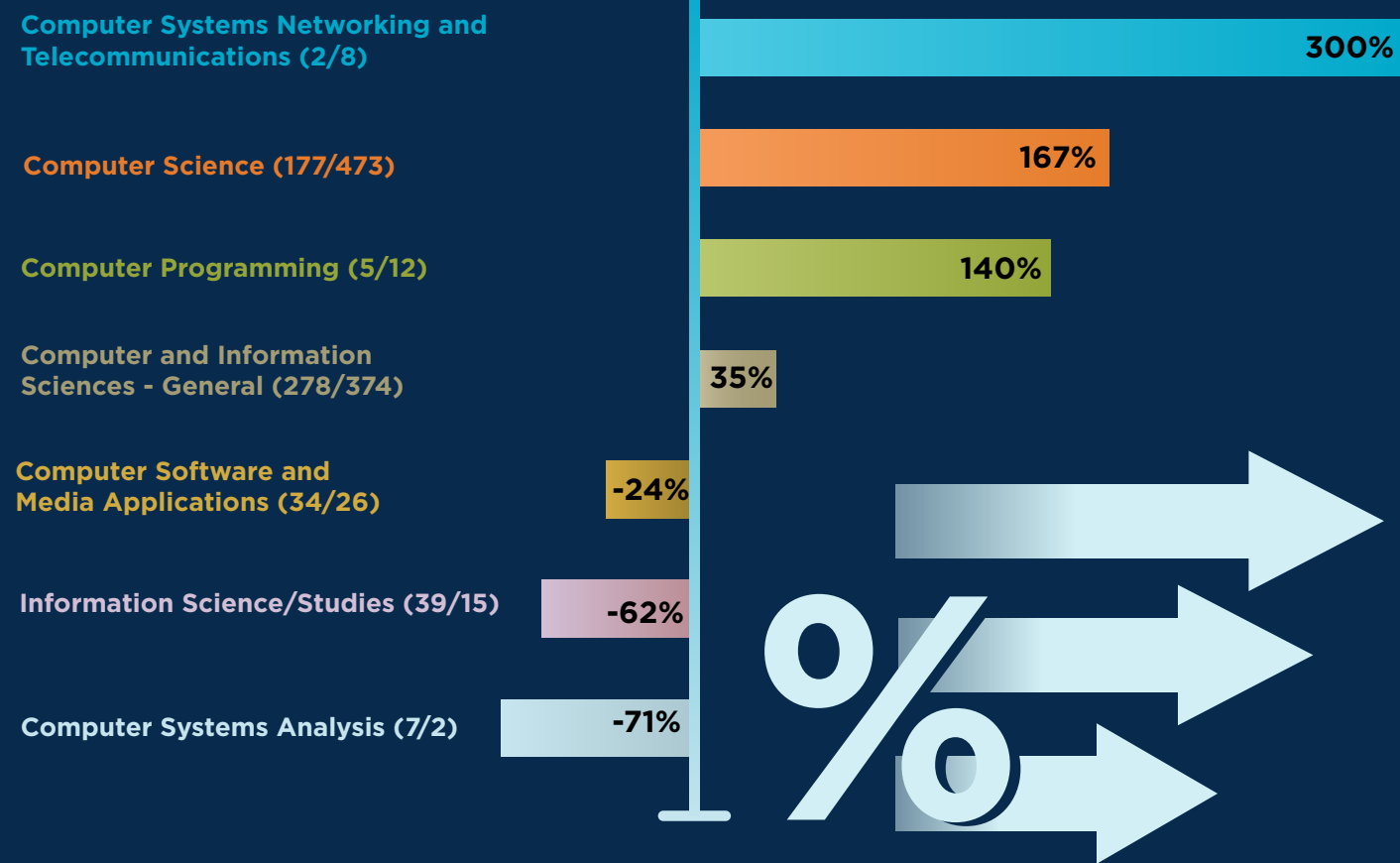
DISTRIBUTION OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES DEGREES AWARDED BY CATEGORY



Just as the overall number of computer science degrees has shifted over the last decade, so too has the distribution of the particular majors students have completed.

PERCENTAGE OF CHANGE IN DEGREES AWARDED BY COMPUTER SCIENCE CATEGORY FROM 2012-13 TO 2022-23

Given the overall changes in computer science degrees awarded over the last 10 years, as well as the changes in which computer majors students are pursuing, this graph highlights the percentage of change in each major from 2012-13 to 2022-23. (Specific numbers for each degree are given in the parentheses, 2009-10 on the left and 2019-20 on the right.)



Compiled by Dr. Jeff Clawson, director of membership, grants & research at the CCCU. All data is from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)

The data in this report was compiled using a list of 120 CCCU Governing Member and Collaborative Partner institutions as of October 2024. More comprehensive reports with information on campus diversity and STEM are available at www.scio-uk.org/research/supporting-stem.

The (Seemingly) Conflicting Vocations of Scholarship vs. Administration (or, Lewis & Clark vs. Jefferson)



In days when our institutions face such stiff headwinds, it is perhaps also possible to wonder (especially in today's highly politicized educational environment) if we sowed the wind and are now reaping the whirlwind, particularly as we manage institutional mission and the contributions of the differing parts of the modern university. In this context, I sometimes wonder what Lewis and Clark thought of Thomas Jefferson, and he of them. Discovery, research, entails risk; risk entails danger but also opportunity. They had such distinctly different roles, depended on one another, and benefited from each other; millions have benefited from their teamwork and their combined contributions in the intervening years.

Research is a process of discovery, and universities are the institutional structures developed in part to support, enhance, and extend opportunities to discover more about our world and ourselves, building that opportunity for discovery into the pedagogy that forms and informs new generations. Hence, universities are also a place that must take certain risks and manage danger, as well as fear. For liberal arts institutions, such research is integral to developing critical thinkers and lifelong learners. It must be led by faculty who have been trained to take risks and executives who know how to manage those risks.

In Christian higher education, we integrate this discovery process within a deep Christian mission, together with faith-integrated pedagogy, all with the view that we conduct this work *coram Deo*, before the face of the divine. As Christian institutions, we integrate our scholarly and pedagogical mission with our credal and theological commitments (the two are not necessarily the same!). Add to this an additional challenge: we work to serve, and must respond to, the founding churches and denominations, the students and their families, our local communities, the broader society, and the common good. No two of these groups completely share the same commitments and vision for our institutions, let alone all of them, and no single group is monolithic either. The leadership must set out for the institution a strategic path, shaping the course and commitments. Institutions establish a true north for themselves within these frameworks, each with their own variation in direction, medium of action, and means of achieving their goals. This situation alone is cause for sleepless nights for those leading our institutions.

The faculty live on the leading edge of this work. Faculty may accept the idea of an institution's true north, but the way north is rarely clear; they remind us that the path does not follow a straight line, and we usually lack a clear map. This uncertainty can be cause for tension. Research is discovery, an adventure where one has a sense of a goal (though the goal itself will grow and alter, may even change dramatically), but not necessarily a clear sense of where the path will lead either in the short- or long-term. Both the path and outcomes can be highly provisional.

The fabric of our educational institutions incorporates commitments that can inherently lead to conflict, discomfort, and consternation for some.

Some of the greatest discoveries that shape our modern world arose out of no precise direction "toward something." Often, these discoveries did not even present a practical, immediate benefit: Michael Faraday, who discovered the ability to induce electricity, also came up with field theory; building on Faraday's theory, James Clerk Maxwell—driven by curiosity—developed his four equations which are so fundamental to modern physics; their work led to Einstein's theories but also the work of Hedy Lamarr, actress and brilliant mathematician who, upon hearing that the Allies needed to prevent torpedoes from jamming, developed a system for frequency hopping which made possible modern wireless technologies. Discovery built upon discovery to transform our world.

Of course, these examples come from what we retrospectively view as relatively untroubling areas of research; walking the uncertain path of research becomes more immediately difficult when a faculty member's work either specifically or implicitly challenges key commitments, common views, or matters that create division and anxiety (cf. Galileo's work). It is well to

Photo courtesy of Stanley P. Rosenberg

remember that the Reformation of the 16th century was birthed through this very process. Challenging orthodoxies is not necessarily wrong, else we would never reform any of our ways of understanding.

Sometimes, a tension can develop between administrators and the faculty, trained to be impractical, seeking the answers to questions, some of which are still unknown. As I've previously written in this magazine (Fall 2020), citing Abraham Flexner's famous argument in his *The Usefulness of Useless Knowledge*, research is a long game. At times, it can appear useless and, when resources are in short supply, cause some to question the value it brings.

Is discovery a distraction or even counter-productive to a Christian higher education institution's core mission? Reform is part of our mission. The faculty are out in the field taking risks, including those that can productively shape their teaching, sometimes in uncomfortable ways. Their risks may add to executives' sleepless nights. It may look like faculty are out on the wild frontier, running amok in the field and in the classroom, indifferent to policy and institutional needs, and the work of the many administrators that enables the institution to thrive, the work needed to keep the ship afloat. In the main, however, that would be a wrong estimation of faculty's role, vocation, purpose, and contribution.

Meanwhile, higher education executives have to keep the institution running and make possible its mission. Their vocation is profoundly shaped by the need to balance all the constituencies noted above. That task is not just herculean, but impossible. Their mission requires them to meet multiple needs—especially in such treacherous and difficult times as now, when institutions face massive headwinds—build the institution, solve multiple perhaps intractable problems, find the funding, contend with legal issues, manage best practice in pedagogy, HR, student life, enrollment management, facility management, trustee management, all while working with the denominations and churches that have a vested interest. This is just a short summary which alone causes high anxiety; consider what the full list must entail. It may look like the management are simply sitting in the castle protecting the domain. In the main, however, that would be a wrong estimation of their role, vocation, purpose, and contribution.

The fabric of our educational institutions incorporates commitments that can inherently lead to conflict, discomfort, and consternation for some.

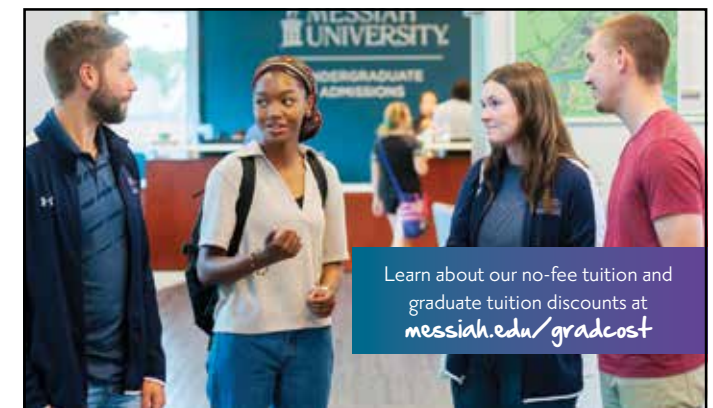
Key to my flourishing as a Christian, a scholar, and an administrator is keeping a clear sense that Christ is the Lord of the journey, its tools and means of transport as well as the outcomes. I do not always have to see, know, and be able to identify God's particular purpose or locale in the particulars to be committed to Him, to experience His presence, and to work

in a way that honors Him. That is to say, fidelity to Christ does not depend on our ability to predict and identify His place in research means or outcomes.

Whether you are a faculty member or an administrator, our vocations mean living with uncertainty and tension. We have to be able to thrive, plot our way north, and walk the path with a lack of clarity that would drive some mad. We have to be able to see and enjoy the hand of God without being able to readily predict His activity and particular purposes in our current environment. Whether one's mission takes one out on the frontier to discover or keeps one in the fort strengthening the work, our mission is advanced *coram Deo* amid uncertainty and tension, not because of our failings now but the result of life in a world full of mystery and uncertainty. Job (though not his "friends") discovered this long before universities appeared on the scene. There is much to be discovered yet, some of which we may unravel, teaching our discoveries to the coming generations. Perhaps Jefferson, Lewis, and Clark apprehended this? Perhaps theirs is a salutary example that can inform our mission?



STANLEY P. ROSENBERG, Ph.D., is the CCCU's vice president for research and scholarship and the executive director of SCIO: Scholarship & Christianity in Oxford, the CCCU's U.K. subsidiary.



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U.S. APPEALS COURT UPHOLDS THE DISMISSAL OF *HUNTER V. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION* LAWSUIT

By Dr. Amanda Staggenborg

ON AUGUST 30, 2024, A THREE-JUDGE PANEL ON THE NINTH CIRCUIT COURT OF APPEALS UNANIMOUSLY UPHELD THE DISTRICT COURT RULING IN *THE HUNTER V. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (2021) LAWSUIT.*

This marks a monumental victory for Christian colleges and universities, protecting and preserving religious freedom in higher education.

The lawsuit began in 2021, when several plaintiffs from CCCU institutions sued the Department of Education, spearheaded by the Religious Exemption Accountability Project (REAP). Throughout the case, the CCCU intervened on behalf of all 180+ member institutions, which meant that the Department and REAP could not settle without the CCCU's consent.

WHAT WERE THE FACTS LEADING UP TO THE HUNTER LAWSUIT?

Forty plaintiffs who applied to and/or attended faith-based institutions claimed that the “schools have discriminated against them by, among other things, subjecting them to discipline (including expulsion), rejecting their applications for admission, and rescinding their admissions because of their sexual orientation or gender identity” (Casetext). The plaintiffs were represented by REAP, an LGBTQ advocacy group which argued that the Title IX exemption for religious institutions violated the plaintiffs’ First Amendment rights under the Establishment Clause and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fifth Amendment. The plaintiffs claimed that the religious exemption was discriminatory towards LGBTQ students in admissions practices and student behavioral expectations.

REAP filed a class action suit on behalf of the 40 plaintiffs to revoke religious liberty protections from all Christian institutions that receive federal funding. The case was heard by the district court in Oregon and dismissed in January 2023 by Judge Ann Aiken, who stated that, “Plaintiffs have not plausibly alleged that the regulatory changes have led or contributed to the harm they have experienced.” REAP appealed the decision to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. In July 2024, the appeals court upheld the dismissal, ruling that the plaintiffs had “lack of standing” in their claims and that the Title IX religious exemption does not violate the First Amendment’s Establishment Clause. Lack of standing means that the plaintiffs did not prove they suffered injuries caused by the Department of Education or the Christian colleges. The panel of judges decided that there was too much speculation in the claims to establish standing to satisfy the law.

WHY IS TITLE IX IMPORTANT FOR CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION?

Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 was signed into law by President Richard Nixon. It prohibits sex-based discrimination but “does not apply to an educational institution that is controlled by a religious organization to the extent that application of Title IX would be inconsistent with the religious tenets of the organization” (U.S. Department of Education site). CCCU institutions that claim an exemption based on religious convictions can still receive federal funding and do not have to alter their beliefs or religious values in order to receive that funding. The CCCU vigorously defends and protects religious freedom and the right of its member institutions to “educate according to mission” (CCCU site).

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT FOR THE CCCU AND HIGHER EDUCATION?

The claims in the Hunter case were a direct attack on religious liberty in Christian higher education. Christian institutions, including all CCCU member schools, enjoy the freedom to practice and promote religious beliefs that align with their institutional mission and vision. In a 2021 statement about the case, the CCCU stated that, “Religious freedom was a driving force in the founding of our nation, resulting in the rich multi-faith and pluralistic world of 21st-century America. It is essential that we continue to strengthen the policies and practices that undergird this distinctive American tradition of civic pluralism, which allows people with

deep differences to create together a society of mutual respect and common flourishing.” Without these exemptions, financial aid would not be possible for thousands of students attending CCCU schools and student choices would have been severely restricted. The appellate outcome protects not only the institutions but students who wish to attend a Christian institution that integrates faith into their chosen academic program.

Maintaining religious freedom in CCCU institutions is vital for continuing faith-filled, biblical standards rooted in institutional traditions and practices. This decision, from both the district level and the appellate court, reinforces the significance of that freedom.


HOW DID THE CCCU PARTICIPATE IN THE CASE?

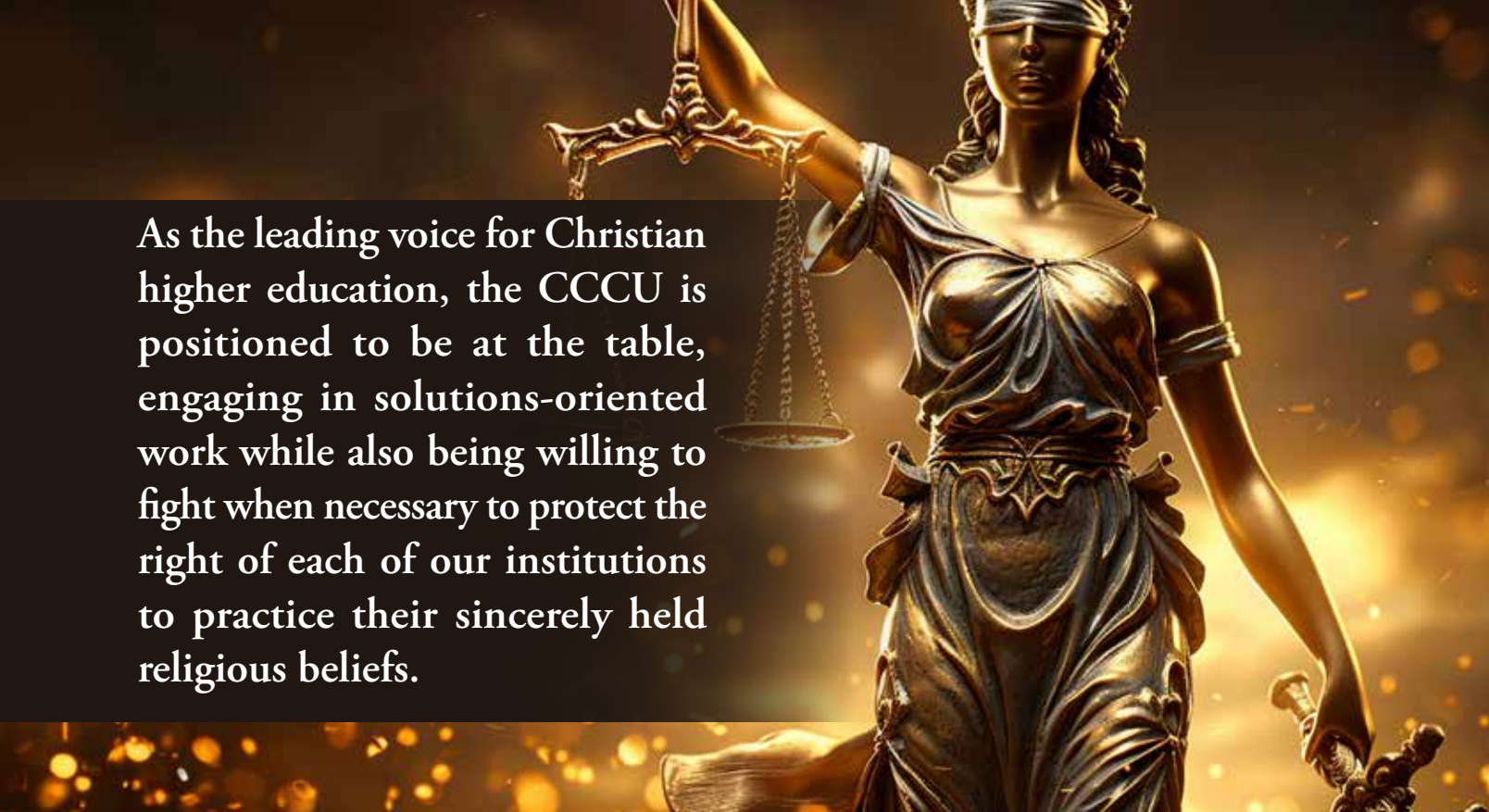
The CCCU joined the case as a codefendant with the Department of Education and filed a motion to dismiss the case on May 12, 2021, which was granted on January 12, 2023. The CCCU rebutted the plaintiffs’ legal claims while being sensitive and compassionate to the students in the case. In addition, the CCCU pursued research from top psychologists and sociologists to push back on the claim “that religious colleges are particularly harmful settings for LGBTQ+ students.” In August 2023, REAP filed an appeal in the Ninth Circuit for the U.S. Court of Appeals. The CCCU joined attorneys from the Department of Education and the Alliance Defending Freedom, further enhancing the CCCU’s defense. The Ninth Circuit three-person panel affirmed the district court’s decision.

The CCCU intervened in this case to protect the ability of religious organizations to live out their faith, to further pursue research that will help campuses support all students in their Christian formation, to prevent individual institutions from having to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal fees to protect the Title IX religious exemption, and to ensure that students retain the freedom to take their federal education dollars to the school of their choice.

As the leading voice for Christian higher education, the CCCU is positioned to be at the table, engaging in solutions-oriented work while also being willing to fight when necessary to protect the right of each of our institutions to practice their sincerely held religious beliefs.

IS THIS THE END? WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

This case sets an important precedent that protects Christian higher education for future generations. While the Hunter case is over, the CCCU’s advocacy efforts continue on Capitol Hill and in other judicial areas. 



As the leading voice for Christian higher education, the CCCU is positioned to be at the table, engaging in solutions-oriented work while also being willing to fight when necessary to protect the right of each of our institutions to practice their sincerely held religious beliefs.



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Shirley

SHIRLEY: A LASTING
LEGACY

*By Dr. Amanda Staggenborg
and Dr. Nathan O. Hatch*

Wearing her trademark colorful suit and a pair of perfectly matching earrings, President Emerita Shirley Hoogstra makes her way to D.C.'s bustling Navy Yard, where sleek office buildings tower over the Nationals Park baseball stadium. The morning is loud with sounds of the city—honking cars, sirens, and the street-side conversation of commuters on their way to work—but Shirley barely notices the hubbub. In a time of silent prayer, she stops to appreciate God's blessings and reflect on her decade of leadership as president of the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities.

To say it has been an eventful decade is an understatement. Hoogstra's indefatigable dedication sparked a legacy that strengthened the CCCU and positioned it as the leading voice of Christian higher education.

Shirley Hoogstra's service to the CCCU began in the fall of 2014, but her academic foundation in Christian higher education has much earlier roots.

As a graduate of Calvin University, she carried her faith throughout her legal career. Though she was a successful, well-respected attorney, her calling remained in Christian higher education, and she decided to return to her alma mater. Hoogstra believed God led her to apply for the role of vice president of student life, stating that it was an "unrelenting prompting." In that role, she mentored scores of students, provided resources, and served on the team that redesigned residence hall common spaces.

In a 2022 interview at Grace College, Shirley reflected on that time at Calvin, stating, "nothing is wasted in God's economy," as she was able to use her gifts and talents exactly where she was called to be. Her motto of "risk more, pray more, and worry less," guided her for more than a decade as she helped to shape students' transformative educational experience at Calvin. She stated that, "God has a chain link, leading to different kinds of experiences that ultimately give you the preparation for the next thing he might want you to do."

After 15 years in student life at Calvin, God's economy led her to the CCCU in 2014. She served as its first female president. Shirley's tenure was marked by a clear focus on advocating for religious liberty, supporting leadership development, increasing the organization's financial sustainability, and expanding the reach and reputation of the CCCU.

President Emerita Hoogstra shares her story and memories of her time leading the CCCU with Dr. Nathan Hatch, former president of Wake Forest University and author of *The Gift of Transformative Leaders* (Cambridge University Press, 2024).

Nathan Hatch: Shirley, you've been a gracious and transformative leader at the CCCU over the last decade. As you look back, what gives you the greatest sense of satisfaction and accomplishment?

Shirley Hoogstra: Looking back over the span of 10 years, one of the greatest things that stands out to me is witnessing the unity and the love that our CCCU campuses have for each other. There are over 180 institutions in our organization, throughout the U.S. and all around the world. These institutions are Christ-centered first and foremost, and they share a common cause.

Working with Christian colleges and universities through the CCCU has been like discovering an entire garden in all its variety and richness. Before coming to the CCCU, I worked at my alma mater, Calvin University. That was one Christian college, and it was like a beautiful apple tree. When I entered into the CCCU, I could suddenly see not just one apple tree, but the pear tree and the evergreen, all kinds of flora and fauna, and together, all of it creates a complete picture of Christian higher education. I have loved the opportunity to see God's plan for the advancement of His Kingdom through the unique form and expression of each college.

Hatch: Under your leadership, how has the CCCU worked to strengthen these institutions?

Hoogstra: During this season of the CCCU, we determined to be the leading voice for advocacy. Now we file all sorts of amicus briefs, we lead the Legal & Public Policy Conference, and we form relationships with religious liberty partners.

We also decided that the CCCU needed to be able to tell the story of Christian higher education more effectively—to our culture more broadly, to Congress, to business. We receive so many phone calls from people who want to speak about Christian colleges, and they didn't know where to get all the facts and figures. We have made a tremendous effort forming relationships with media outlets, from *The Wall Street Journal* to the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, *Deseret News*, *World Magazine*, *Christianity Today*, and more, helping to give Christian higher education a voice in society.

Hatch: Shirley, you've worked with so many college and university leaders. What have you learned about leadership?

Hoogstra: Well, there's no one kind of president: extroverted, introverted, with a background in finance or student life or academic disciplines. It is a role that requires a combination of skills, a huge dose of humility, and a level of persistence in the face of cascading challenges that is truly a calling.

Hatch: What is the greatest opportunity for Christian colleges and universities today?

Hoogstra: The greatest opportunity for Christian colleges is to be the exemplar for moral education. Faith integration and service learning are so central to Christian higher education, and they provide a model that all of higher education, and the world more broadly, needs now more than ever.

Hatch: During your time in Washington, you've also been part of the Washington Higher Education Secretariat, so you've had to work with all kinds of different people, some who would understand Christian colleges and some who wouldn't. What have you learned about being a Christian operating in the public square?

Hoogstra: First of all, Nathan, that it is so interesting! Figuring out why other people are passionate about what they're passionate about, finding out what great ideas other people have, it is the perfect opportunity to really delve into what we call common grace. If Christian higher education has more special revelation at its core, we see the world doing so many good things through this concept of common grace.

Being a Christian in the public square provides an opportunity to exercise your faith in its best form. The Bible tells us to love



The greatest opportunity for Christian colleges is to be the exemplar for moral education.



God and love our neighbor (Matthew 22:37-39), to always be prepared to give the hope that you have (1 Peter 3:15), and that kindness leads to repentance (Romans 2:4). So if the most important identifier I wear on my metaphorical name tag is “Christian,” “Jesus lover,” “daughter of the King,” how would a person in the public square recognize that? It is often out of having real respect for the person on the other side of the table.

That Secretariat table seats about 60 other higher education associations, and we all support each other. So many people are doing important things, and we all learn from each other. It’s been invaluable for the CCCU to be at that table.

Hatch: Ten years from now, what are your hopes for the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities and its member institutions?

Hoogstra: In John 13:34, Jesus tells us to love one another. We live in a difficult world today, but it was not easier living in biblical times. People faced all kinds of challenges, including political occupations, health, housing insecurity, tribalism. Yet even in that context, the Bible says, “Love one another.” That’s because love is the antidote for the hatred, the division, the animosity. I would want campuses to continue to love one another and to be known for generosity of spirit—that they would bring forth solutions to the world’s problems.

For the CCCU, I hope that they are even more invaluable to members and their partner organizations. I hope that the CCCU will be salt and light in Washington, D.C., as they continue to advance Christian higher education for the next 100 years, or until the Lord comes again. 🙏



Shirley at a panel on the history of the transatlantic slave trade and why it matters for Christian higher education at the 2020 Presidents Conference



Shirley celebrates with Dr. Barbara Bellefeuille at her inauguration as president of Bethel University (IN), October 2022



Shirley enjoying the company of Dallas Baptist University leadership, Oct. 2018



Shirley and Jeff Hoogstra in their D.C. home, Christmas 2022



Shirley with CCCU staff at the first Legal & Public Policy Conference in Arizona, Sept. 2022



Shirley attends the inauguration of Taylor University president Dr. Michael Lindsay, Oct. 2021



Shirley at a panel on the importance of religious higher education at the 2019 Presidents Conference



Shirley receives the Distinguished Service Award from the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor at their fall convocation, Aug. 2024



Shirley delivers the T.B. Maston Lecture in Christian Ethics at Dallas Baptist University, Oct. 2018



Shirley and Jeff enjoying the fall colors in upper Michigan, 2023



Shirley with the authors of 'I'll Push You' (Patrick Gray and Justin Skeesuck) at the 2019 Multi-Academic Conference




DR. AMANDA STAGGENBORG
Chief Communications Officer,
CCCU



DR. NATHAN O. HATCH
President Emeritus,
Wake Forest University

Photo credit: Shirley Hoogstra



STEERING THROUGH THE HEADWINDS

REFLECTIONS ON THE PAST,
INSIGHT FOR THE FUTURE

A CONVERSATION WITH

Dr. David Hoag
Dr. Dan Boone
Dr. David Wright
Dr. Shirley Mullen
Dr. Jay Barnes
Dr. Chip Pollard

Over the past decade, Christian higher education has faced unprecedented challenges. Technological advancements, government regulations, cultural changes, a global pandemic, the impending demographic cliff, and more have prompted Christ-centered colleges and universities to innovate and adapt while holding firm to their deeply held religious beliefs and mission.

In 2014, the CCCU Board of Directors voted for Shirley V. Hoogstra as the seventh president of the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities. Ten years later, after Hoogstra announced her retirement in 2024, the CCCU Board named her successor: Dr. David A. Hoag.

As the CCCU marks this landmark presidential transition, President Hoag invited the five Christian higher education leaders who have served as chairs on the CCCU Board of Directors to reflect on the past decade. What challenges have Christian universities and the CCCU faced? How have they adapted? What insights can these individuals share as leaders of Christian higher education today look toward the future?

David Hoag: Thinking back to 2014, what leadership priorities were top of mind for the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities?

Chip Pollard: In 2014, the board and search committee were looking for someone who could provide steady, wise, and sustained leadership to the CCCU—someone who could unify and lead for the future. Shirley was the right leader at the right time. She had high-level leadership experience at Calvin University, experience working with the CCCU, and key legal experience. She was eager to advocate on behalf of the CCCU. She was theologically grounded, dispositionally optimistic, hopeful, wise, experienced, and completely committed to Christian higher education.

Jay Barnes: When Shirley Hoogstra was chosen to lead the CCCU, the organization faced several challenging issues. We needed a leader who was wise, who could build bridges to the various wings of the CCCU, who could network with other higher education entities in Washington, and who could articulate the vision needed to advance Christian higher education. We needed an effective advocate who could rally our institutions to a worthy cause.

Hoag: What milestones have marked the past decade for Christian higher education and the CCCU? What predominant headwinds have we faced?

Shirley Mullen: The past decade has seen ever-greater polarization of society at all levels, both in the political and religious sphere. This has required the CCCU to be especially attentive to the constant potential for fractious issues to divide its membership even as it sought to maintain an overall respectability and legitimacy for the work of Christian higher education within the Department of Education and Congress.

The CCCU committed to a strategy of engagement rather than isolation, proactively choosing to partner with the larger world of higher education when common interests aligned. This was reflected in unprecedented levels of intentional engagement with leaders of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU), the American Council on Education (ACE), the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC), leaders of Catholic higher education, and more. This was a time during which NAICU deliberately sought to include on their own board more members of CCCU institutions—understanding that these CCCU leaders understood how to navigate faith commitments within a pluralistic context.

Another key headwind over the past 10 years has been continuing public pressure to defend the value of Christian higher education. For the CCCU, this reflected the need for three levels of defense—the value of a college education in general, the value of a private college education, and the value of a Christian private education.

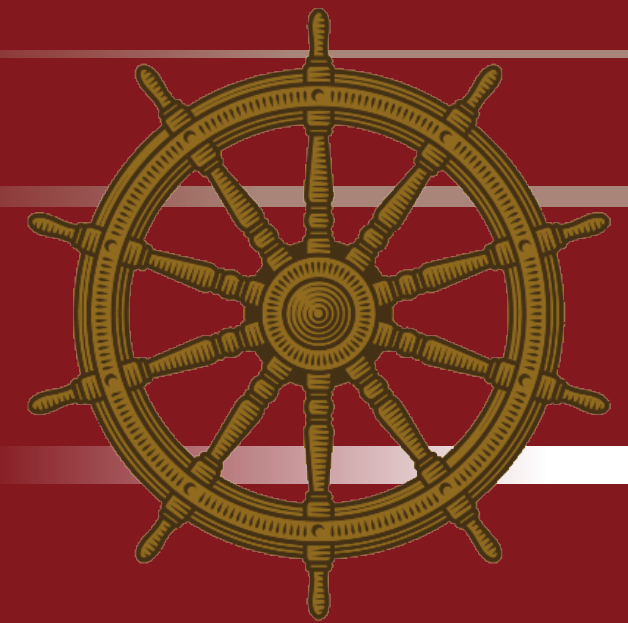
Barnes: As Shirley assumed leadership, the culture was rapidly moving away from historic views held by the world’s monotheistic religions. Several of our universities began examining their hiring practices and student conduct codes. Over the course of several months, the CCCU reaffirmed our commitment to historic biblical understandings, requiring governing members to affirm those as well, while creating new membership categories for institutions who had changed some of their policies and practices.

Pollard: The COVID-19 pandemic was one major unexpected headwind during the past decade. Beyond the challenges the pandemic brought to higher education, it also required the CCCU to quickly rethink the role of the overseas GlobalEd programs within the CCCU’s portfolio of services.

Hoag: How did Christian higher education change during your tenure as board chair?

David Wright: The early 2020s have seen an increase in the number of institutions diversifying their academic offerings to include professional programs, as well as adult-focused, nontraditional programs. At the same time, Christian institutions have had to become much more aware of the regulatory, legislative, and legal landscape than ever before. The need for consistent and effective advocacy has become a central concern of Christian institutions.

Dan Boone: When I became board chair in 2023, we were observing early signs of financial weakness in many of our schools as we walked through COVID. The infusion of funding from a supportive federal government sustained even the weakest of schools for a few years. Over the past two years, I have seen the acceleration of school closings, enrollment declines, and financial exigency within our own family of schools.



The past decade has seen ever-greater polarization of society at all levels, both in the political and religious sphere. This has required the CCCU to be especially attentive to the constant potential for fractious issues to divide its membership even as it sought to maintain an overall respectability and legitimacy for the work of Christian higher education...

—Dr. Shirley Mullen



<p>DR. DAVID A. HOAG President, CCCU</p>	<p>DR. DAN BOONE President, Trevecca Nazarene University CCCU Board Chair (2023-2025)</p>	<p>DR. DAVID WRIGHT President Emeritus, Indiana Wesleyan University CCCU Board Chair (2022-2023)</p>
<p>DR. SHIRLEY MULLEN President Emerita, Houghton University CCCU Board Chair (2020-2022)</p>	<p>DR. JAY BARNES President Emeritus, Bethel University (MN) CCCU Board Chair (2018-2020)</p>	<p>DR. CHIP POLLARD President, John Brown University CCCU Board Chair (2013-2018)</p>


Hoag: What challenges do leaders in Christian higher ed face in 2024? How can the CCCU meet those challenges?

Boone: Being persons who follow Jesus is one thing. Reflecting that priority through an entire institution is another. Our presidents are looking for the right posture to take, based on the ethic of Jesus, in a world that may not welcome our input. However, the wisdom of God will shine like light in the darkness if we can be unapologetically Christian without being seduced by the sirens of an angry culture. The CCCU must prioritize helping presidents and institutions to find the posture of Christ.

Barnes: First, I think the continuing challenge for Christian higher education is to remain mission-true. While we must adapt to changes in the broader culture, it must never come at the cost of surrendering our Christ-centered commitments. We expect to be countercultural in what we believe. The fact that we see the integration of faith into learning and life as essential makes us outliers. The CCCU's role in mission enhancement and preservation is essential.

Another ongoing challenge is the need to arrive at an economic model that brings together the supply and demand for higher education. Christian colleges and universities face increasing competition from alternative means of credentialing, especially driven by technology. This certainly applies to the larger world of higher education as well, but it applies in some particularly challenging ways to CCCU institutions—many of which are rural and relatively small, with high levels of investment in physical buildings, and with strong alumni loyalties and constituency loyalties that make timely decisions for innovation extra difficult.

In the face of these challenges, the CCCU can continue to promote in its programming the space for ongoing dialogue among member institutions on all the controversial issues of the day, continue to partner with the larger world of higher education on issues of common concern, and continue to pursue bipartisan connections in Washington so that the CCCU and the needs of higher education in general are understood no matter which party is in power.



Christian higher education is one of the great leavening influences in American society...God uses Christian higher education to bless individuals and communities out of all proportion to our size and political standing.

—Dr. David Wright



Second, the scope of education and delivery systems continue to evolve. Will the circle for potential recruitment of students continue to shrink? Will vocational educational programs find a home in residential colleges? Will the growth of credentials, certificates, delivery through professional organizations, and other nontraditional forms of education become part of CCCU institutions? The CCCU has an important role in helping members imagine the future, learn from each other, and learn how to deliver life-changing experiences in new ways.

Mullen: Concerns around human sexuality seem to have become the contemporary litmus test, such that it is increasingly difficult for institutions and denominations to have the kind of deep theological, biblically informed discussions around these issues that Christian higher education would equip people of faith to have. One challenge is discerning how Christian colleges and universities can continue to facilitate these kinds of conversations.

Wright: The leaders of Christian higher education face two primary challenges in 2024. These are not new challenges, but they demand much more sophistication, persistence, and creativity than ever before.

The first is to be absolutely clear about and resolute in the pursuit of the institution's unique Christian mission. Growing from this is the need to be absolutely clear about the audience the institution is serving and to be sophisticated and consistent in communicating with that audience.

The second challenge is to ensure that the institution's business plan is current and well-suited to the current realities. It will be impossible to thrive over the next decade using a way of doing business that is structured for an environment that existed 50 years ago.

Hoag: How has President Emerita Shirley Hoogstra's leadership shaped the CCCU over the past 10 years?

Barnes: The CCCU might not exist today if Shirley had not become president. She brought vision, courage, and a willingness to connect in helpful ways with the broader higher education world. Under her leadership we successfully navigated the headwinds of the past decade. To do that, we redefined membership and the responsibilities of membership. She worked hard to make sure that all theological flavors of the Christian family were valued.

Wright: Shirley led the association through the institutional earthquake of the dissolution of the GlobalEd programs. It is impossible to overstate the impact of this change on the finances, identity, and functioning of the CCCU. Though these programs had been declining for years, the pandemic forced a massive shift in the work of the association. Shirley's leadership was key to the transition the CCCU had to make in its focus and finances.

Above all, the one thing that I believe will define the era of Shirley's leadership of the CCCU is the work to secure a legislative and legal space in which CCCU institutions may pursue their mission and operate according to their deeply held religious convictions. The years of Shirley's tenure saw the most serious attack on, and potential erosion of, CCCU institutions' ability to legally operate according to their religious convictions and still participate in the federal framework that supports higher education. Shirley's leadership was crucial to securing a legal and regulatory future for Christian higher education.

Pollard: Throughout the decade, Shirley has been the consummate networker in Washington, getting the CCCU at the table in so many conversations for the first time. She has also been a champion for CCCU institutions and their people—encouraging leaders in our organizations through the CCCU's convening power.

Beyond her work as a bridge builder, Shirley has deeply shaped the movement through the tone she has set for the CCCU. She is irrepressibly optimistic; she is deeply grounded in her faith so she has little fear in engaging people who are either hostile towards or ignorant about the Christian faith; she is smart and strategic in advocacy both in litigation and legislation; she makes friends easily; she loves the breadth of institutions and people in the CCCU, and she wants each institution and each person to flourish in the unique calling that God has given to them.


Mullen: President Hoogstra has truly been God's leader for this hour at the CCCU. She has an incredible, unique capacity to speak for Christian higher education in ways that both protect its distinctive qualities and demonstrate its rich contribution to the treasured diversity of American higher education. Her tireless work ethic and proactive pursuit of institutions who may have questions or concerns, as well as her cultivation of new potential members and partners, have meant that not only has the CCCU not fallen apart amidst the challenges of this past decade, but emerged stronger and with more credibility than ever.

Hoag: What are your hopes for the future of Christian higher education and the CCCU?

Barnes: God willing, I hope we celebrate the 50th and 60th anniversaries of the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities with joy and confidence that the CCCU is making a difference. We need to continue the strong advocacy and networking that Shirley enhanced. We need a sense that we are in this together, doing our best to help each other thrive. We need to think creatively about the type of education and delivery systems that will allow our missions to flourish in the decades to come. While we should value our different flavors as institutions, we must celebrate the things that unite us.

Pollard: My hope is that the CCCU will continue to be the winsome, joyful, committed, and thoughtful voice for Christian higher education. That the CCCU remains a broad tent of different denominational and interdenominational schools committed to the same core theological beliefs and advocacy positions. That students, faculty, and staff will thrive and flourish in their calling. That the CCCU remains an effective advocate to ensure our religious freedom, which allows us to fulfill our missions in harmony with our deeply held Christian convictions. That the membership will support, encourage, and pray for David Hoag and the CCCU staff as they represent Christian higher education in so many different venues.

Wright: Christian higher education is one of the great leavening influences in American society. Its impact is felt most at the local level, but it reaches throughout the American economic and political landscape. God uses Christian higher education to bless individuals and communities out of all proportion to our size and political standing. My prayer is that this spiritual, intellectual, cultural, and economic vehicle will continue to thrive for many generations to come.

Boone: I am a prisoner of hope and am committed to the radical optimism of grace. The CCCU stands in a moment of history to serve the next generation of college students. They already know that the way of the world is not creating communities that teem with peace, justice, and joy. Under the leadership of David Hoag, I believe we will sharpen our distinctive contribution to humanity through a formative college experience for the incoming generation. Our graduates will be the leaders the world needs. We have hard trench work to do, and God is with us in the trench. 

NAVIGATING AI IN CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

By Dr. Stan Rosenberg

With
Dr. Joy Buchanan
Dr. Andrew Lang
Dr. David Bourgeois



Artificial intelligence has existed in various forms since the 1950s but has emerged as a culture-shaping technology with the advent of ChatGPT and similar generative AI tools. In 2024, businesses, schools, and individuals are learning to harness the power of machines to foster innovation, growth, productivity, and profits. Students stand to benefit immensely from the wise use of this technology, and faculty are adapting pedagogy and curriculum to develop new and necessary skills.

At the same time, AI can present new challenges in the form of plagiarism and other learning shortcuts. For example, faculty express increasing concern that students are not reading—nor properly analyzing or critiquing—assigned texts, instead depending on AI-generated summaries that shortchange their educational experience and formation. In a sea of change, this powerful technology provides both exciting opportunities and various challenges to those who use it and are otherwise impacted by its influence.

To explore this timely topic, I invited three leaders from CCCU institutions to discuss AI. Dr. Joy Buchanan is an associate professor of quantitative analysis and economics at Samford University (Birmingham, AL). Dr. Andrew Lang is a senior professor and the chair of the computing and mathematics department at Oral Roberts University (Tulsa, OK). Dr. David Bourgeois is the associate dean, a professor of business analytics and artificial intelligence, and the director of the AI Lab at Biola University (La Mirada, CA). Here are their thoughts on the benefits of and concerns about artificial intelligence and what this means for students, both now and in the future.

Dr. Stan Rosenberg: Do you see in your own work that human beings are being seen more and more in terms of information? What might be good about this? What might be sacrificed?

Dr. Joy Buchanan: In the field of economics, we already have a reputation for thinking about people in a simplified, analytical way. So, human beings aren't really being seen differently now in economics due to the rise of AI technologies via large language models (LLMs).



Human intellectual skills once seemed mystical. Now we are learning that machines can do mental labor, given enough electricity. To give credit to humans, these LLMs are training on human writing. At this stage, they are mostly recycling what I call “our” words and ideas. Still, it’s remarkable that machines could sound so intelligent. This might mean that humans have to reshuffle jobs in a painful way over the next decade.

The trend of viewing humans through the lens of data analytics does carry potential benefits. It can lead to more efficient systems, improved processes, and advancements in fields like medicine.

Humans are more than LLMs, however, and it’s often been the church that has articulated a value for humanity beyond our intellect. King Solomon, who wanted to achieve great wisdom, wrote that, ultimately, being smart is not enough for a meaningful life. Within religion, we are not primarily valued for our intelligence, but rather for our personhood.

Dr. Andrew Lang: Yes, in my own work, I do see a growing trend of viewing human beings in terms of information, especially as we develop models that replicate human decision-making. There is undeniable potential in this approach. By reducing human behavior to data, we can design more efficient systems and make significant strides in medicine, education, and beyond. However, what may be sacrificed is the recognition of the full complexity of human experience—something that transcends the data we generate or the mental tasks we perform.

While AI has made impressive progress, particularly through the pursuit of artificial general intelligence (AGI), these systems currently reflect and recycle existing human knowledge rather than generate original, creative thought. They may mimic human intellect, but they do not yet grasp the depth of human insight or creativity. What sets us apart is not just our cognitive abilities but our intrinsic personhood and the richness that machines, at present, cannot replicate.

As the race toward AGI continues, I believe we may well achieve this milestone within the next decade—a remarkable and transformative possibility. However, my

deeper concern lies with the development of “Strong AI,” an intelligence that not only mirrors human reasoning but also simulates consciousness and self-awareness, potentially possessing mental states, beliefs, desires, and emotions akin to humans. This prospect, more than AGI itself, is where the true ethical and existential questions begin.

As AI tools become more powerful, they are streamlining data analysis and decision-making, allowing professionals to focus on more creative and strategic tasks.

—Dr. Andrew Lang

Rosenberg: What impact do you foresee in your field due to the increasing sophistication of AI, and what kind of skills do you think your students will need to be successful?

Buchanan: AI will reshape economic analysis and modeling, making complex data processing and predictive analytics more accessible. This will lead to more sophisticated economic forecasting and policy design. Economists will become more productive, and expectations will rise accordingly. While some fields might resist change, economics will be at the forefront of AI integration.

For students aiming to succeed, it’s crucial to embrace AI tools without relying on them excessively during college. Strong fundamentals in economic theory and critical thinking remain essential, coupled with data science and programming skills.

Interdisciplinary knowledge, especially in tech and social sciences, will be valuable. Adaptability and lifelong learning are key in this evolving field. Human skills like creativity, communication, and ethical reasoning will remain crucial.

While AI will alter economics, it will also present opportunities for those who can adapt and effectively combine economic thinking with technological proficiency.

Lang: AI’s increasing sophistication is already changing many fields, including my own. As AI tools become more powerful, they are streamlining data analysis and decision-making, allowing professionals to focus on more creative and strategic tasks. For now, students will need to develop a blend of technical skills—data science, machine learning, and programming—alongside their core expertise to harness AI effectively. However, while these skills are essential in the near term, this focus may be short-sighted.

In my view, the current impact of AI is only temporary. As we move toward the development of Strong AI, the landscape will change dramatically. Human qualities like creativity and ethical reasoning will remain important, but they will be challenged in ways we can’t yet fully predict. The advent of AGI and Strong AI will likely demand a different kind of thinking—one that is not limited by the tools and techniques of today but is prepared to address the profound shifts that AI could bring to our understanding of intelligence, personhood, and the nature of work itself.

I foresee the emergence of human-level Strong AI within the next 30 years, bringing with it profound questions about “rights” and “personhood.” I anticipate that the secular world will gradually begin to advocate for “rights” for these machines, challenging us to contemplate even more deeply what it truly means to be human.

As Christians, how should we respond? Should we extend the same consideration to these entities as we might to intelligent extraterrestrial beings or self-aware animals?

Dr. David Bourgeois: Our students are already using AI to varying degrees. Employers are expecting that students will understand how to use it

to improve productivity. Generative AI can increase productivity in two ways: (1) increasing the overall rate of content creation, be it website code, grant requests, or social media posts, and (2) upskilling employees by giving them the ability to complete tasks they were previously incapable of doing (such as programming or creating logos). This second productivity increase comes with a caveat: generative AI will not make us experts at anything; it will only give us capabilities deemed average (or below average) by other professionals in the field. Whether this changes is yet to be seen.

AI can never be human: it can never love; it can never have empathy; it can never be truly creative. So, besides learning how to use AI, our students need to have experiences to improve these very human skills. Finally, they need to understand the ethical and spiritual issues raised by the consistent use of these tools. Our AI Lab has recently published a set of biblical principles to guide our use of artificial intelligence.

Rosenberg: Do you think humans are unique? What makes them unique? How does this impact what you teach or how you teach it?

Lang: Humanity is undeniably unique. We are created in the image of God, which grants us a dignity and purpose that far exceeds mere biological existence. Our uniqueness doesn't just lie in our intellect

or creativity, but in the fact that we are spiritual beings, intrinsically connected to the divine. This profound spiritual nature sets us apart, elevating us beyond any machine, no matter how advanced.

Unlike AI, we are not simply processors of information; we are beings capable of love, empathy, and a deep, moral consciousness. This spiritual identity influences not only what I teach but how I teach it. I emphasize to my students that technology, while powerful, cannot replace the richness of human experience or the sacredness of our existence. As AI progresses, this truth becomes more important.

Bourgeois: Like Dr. Lang, I too believe that humans are created in the image of God, which means that we are loving, relational, and creative, among many attributes. Sometimes these characteristics lie dormant or unused as we rush from screen to screen. Instead, we should be including activities in our classes that cause students to exercise these abilities and then understand how to use AI to supplement, not replace them.

Rosenberg: How has the erosion of expertise, authority, and trust impacted the work you are seeing from your students? How have you responded? What do you think should be some characteristics or components of “digital wisdom” on your campus and in your field?

Lang: The erosion of expertise, authority, and trust is profoundly affecting students, particularly as they increasingly rely on AI as a primary information source. This reliance often bypasses the critical assessment necessary to distinguish credible information from misleading content, thereby challenging the traditional roles of educators.

Buchanan: The internet-based culture that current students have inherited from millennials has failed them in some ways and is often just plain shallow. Don't underestimate Gen Z's ability to find out the truth for themselves. The erosion of traditional authority has led students to seek authenticity elsewhere, often bypassing conventional sources of information.

While young people today may not have a universally trusted media figure like Walter Cronkite, they have unprecedented access to information. This presents both challenges and opportunities. Don't be surprised if there is a cultural comeback for the true classics among a generation burned out on TikTok, reminiscent of how Renaissance scholars rediscovered ancient Greek works. People want something authentic. Religious colleges are places to find wisdom that has stood the test of time, not just entertainment that's had a viral moment. I'm in a diverse, non-religious group chat of writers, and one Gen Z member recently remarked that, “Every young person I know is reading

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—Dr. David Bourgeois

the Bible.” The world religions will certainly be one of the places people turn to find a rock of stability while they are buffeted about by their social media feeds and 24/7 global news cycles.

Colleges need to find a way to balance two things. It is true that attention spans have gotten shorter, and we do need to make sure that assigned readings and activities are accessible to students. However, I think we can also seize this moment to help them find something they are really looking for: authenticity. Most students see overscrolling and screen addiction as a problem. A college campus is a place where we can help hold each other accountable (including faculty) to stop scrolling, reach higher, and turn our attention to media that teaches timeless wisdom.

Also, students need to have a canon of quality writing which they can compare against quickly generated LLM outputs. They need to know a core set of facts to measure against claims their computers will spout.

Rosenberg: Have you seen the power of information technology shape social and political concerns on your campus and amongst your students? Perhaps you've seen it at work in your own field, as well. What have been some of the benefits, and what are some of the costs?

Lang: This issue is compounded by the fact that many AI systems are developed in alignment with prevailing academic philosophies, which may conflict with Christian values and other perspectives. The “guardrails” designed to mitigate bias in AI are often rooted in “critical theory,” a dominant framework in academia, which can lead to AI systems that inadvertently marginalize certain groups, such as white, male, rural, and Christian populations. These biases are frequently underexamined, raising significant concerns about the unchecked acceptance of AI-generated content as truth in educational settings.

The broader, more pressing issue with AI, then, lies in the philosophical and ethical implications of its

development. This challenge is known as the alignment problem—whether AI can be aligned with human values. What exactly are “human values”? AI alignment is occurring in ways that are, in my opinion, very concerning. For instance, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has explicitly mandated that AI development support the party's broader goals and values, such as national rejuvenation and the promotion of socialism with Chinese characteristics. The CCP's directives emphasize that these technologies contribute positively to societal development and do not contradict the established ideological norms.

Similarly, recent AI-alignment executive orders from the U.S. government exhibit an ideologically narrow focus on equity, as seen in the directive: “Artificial Intelligence policies must be consistent with my Administration's dedication to advancing equity and civil rights.” This approach, however, is not without its dangers. It could be just as perilous as a future government mandating that AI must always promote capitalist

Humanity is undeniably unique. We are created in the image of God, which grants us a dignity and purpose that far exceeds mere biological existence.

—Dr. Andrew Lang

ideologies. Such directives risk shaping social and political opinions through AI in ways that may not always serve the best interests of society.

The critical question remains: What should we align AI to? As Christian educators, I believe we have a moral obligation to engage with and thoughtfully address the challenges posed by AI. It is essential to provide guidance to students on the responsible use of AI. Without such guidance, the potential for AI to shape the social and political opinions of our students in harmful ways becomes a significant concern.

Rosenberg: Do you think moral de-skilling—because of AI taking on more and more decisions—is an issue we should be concerned about? What impact might judgment atrophy have on your field and your students? What should be done about it?

Bourgeois: To use AI effectively, we need to have some understanding of the types of work we are asking it to do. In the case of decision-making, our students should be learning how to make the decisions necessary to be successful both in their personal and professional lives. If machines will begin making decisions for us, then we need to first understand how those decisions are made and provide oversight to them.

Lang: AI is a powerful tool that exemplifies the dual-use dilemma—it holds the potential to be harnessed for tremendous good but also for great harm. This dual-use potential raises critical concerns, as the increasing reliance on AI for decision-making may diminish our students' ability to make ethical judgments for themselves.

As institutions of Christian higher education, it is imperative that we approach AI with the gravity it deserves. We must integrate AI literacy into our curricula, either as a distinct component or as part of broader information literacy initiatives grounded in a liberal arts education. This approach will help ensure

Time is your truly scarce resource. If you are letting the social media algorithms devour too much of it, that's an atrophy of judgment we need to fight. Attending a university in person might help provide that accountability, in putting our time toward a higher goal of acquiring learning and preparing ourselves for a meaningful future.

—*Dr. Joy Buchanan*

that our students remain capable of critical thinking and ethical reasoning, even in an AI-driven world.

Our ultimate goal should be to cultivate well-rounded individuals who are not only technically proficient but also morally and ethically grounded. By nurturing both intellect and conscience, we prepare our students to navigate a new world with wisdom and moral integrity.

Buchanan: Back in 2013, economist Tyler Cowen suggested in his book *Average Is Over* that AI was already embedded in our lives. We trusted computers to tell us where to drive and even whom to date. Our sense of direction, literally, has decayed as we've handed those decisions over to our phones.

Have we been delegating moral decisions to AI? What about how we spend our time? Time is your truly scarce resource. If you are letting the social media algorithms devour too much of it, that's an atrophy of judgment we need to fight. Attending a university in person might help provide that accountability, in putting our time toward a higher goal of acquiring learning and preparing ourselves for a meaningful future. I think we can make a moral case for everyone pursuing good scholarship.

Writing used to be a form of mental, and arguably, moral discipline when done well. Now, for the first time, machines can do writing for us. LLMs can provide access to valuable information, but they can also make serious mistakes, as my research shows. We still need dedicated human scholars to guide the process of knowledge creation and safeguard progress.

LLMs might enable the professionals of tomorrow to be more creative and productive. However, I think that will only happen if students gain a base of knowledge and wisdom that will help them evaluate AI output. It is important for them to develop good judgment. Even though reading core texts fell out of fashion compared to STEM skills in the past few decades, current students need a more balanced education precisely to be able to use computers at full capacity in the future. 🙏

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HONORING THE LEGACY OF SENATOR HATFIELD

By Jacqueline Isaacs, MBA

On a borrowed bookshelf, where a collection of my husband's college textbooks and my own have accumulated, sits a Greek New Testament. I remember discovering the leather-bound copy in the basement of the Dellenback Center, then home to the CCCU's American Studies Program (ASP) in Washington, D.C., in the fall of 2009.

The CCCU had completed a major renovation of the Dellenback Center over the summer, converting the room that used to serve as a library into a computer lab. The library's books were stored in the basement, where I found them still in scattered boxes and misshapen piles. I was a junior from Oral Roberts University (Tulsa, OK) studying at ASP for the semester, and the program director invited me to take whatever books I wanted. I shipped several boxes of books home that semester. Over the last 15 years, those books have scattered: some given to friends, some donated, some lost. But I've held on to a few of them, including that leather-bound Greek New Testament. Sometimes I still grab it off the shelf for study and personal devotions. Every time, the book serves as a reminder of my semester at ASP, a season that launched my career integrating faith and public policy.

To this day, "Hatfield Library" is stamped on the deckle edge of that Greek New Testament. The library that once filled the front room of the Dellenback Center was named after Senator Mark O. Hatfield (1922–2011) from Oregon, a longtime supporter of the CCCU and a lifelong believer in the need for Christians to bring their faith to bear on public policy and the public square. Eventually, that library was replaced with computers, the American Studies Program closed, and the Dellenback Center was sold when the CCCU moved to its new office in D.C.'s Navy Yard, but vision lasts longer than the passing of seasons.

The CCCU continues to honor Senator Hatfield's vision through the Mark O. Hatfield Leadership Award, presented to individuals who have demonstrated uncommon leadership that reflects the values of Christian higher education. Recent recipients of that award include *New York Times* columnist David Brooks (2023), Senator Ben Sasse (2020), and the late Michael Cromartie (2017).

Our friends at the Center for Public Justice (CPJ) also advance Senator Hatfield's legacy through an annual grant called the Hatfield Prize. According to CPJ, this grant is awarded to three student-faculty pairs to conduct a semester-long research project "on social policies that impact vulnerable children, families, and communities, and explore the impact of these policies in their local communities." The prize aims to remember the legacy of Senator Hatfield, inspiring a new generation of undergraduates at CCCU institutions to pursue his vision of working across differences to locate better answers to policy problems. The Hatfield Prize is funded by the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust and the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

The 2024 Hatfield Prize was awarded to student-faculty pairs from Baylor University, Grove City College, and Wheaton College. Emily Crouch, program director of shared justice at CPJ, shared, "Our student-faculty pairs... have spent countless hours writing up excellent reports that will help to inform discussions around immigration, food security, and workforce development among policymakers and faith-based organizations alike. The reports touch on three incredibly relevant questions to our current political discourse: With so much immigration to the U.S., how can faith-based social services respond to the increases in demand? In a time of rapid technological development, how do we equip people for not just a job, but a lifetime of meaningful work? What lessons have we learned from COVID-19 aid and how do we adjust these policies for the post-pandemic world we live in? Megan, Jackson, and Addison provide detailed suggestions for each of these questions in the reports."

Below we are pleased to share brief articles that each pair wrote summarizing their reports, and we encourage you to read the full research reports published by CPJ. As you read on, I encourage you to see this work not just as the interesting research conducted by your peers (and students) in Christian higher education, but as markers along the road.

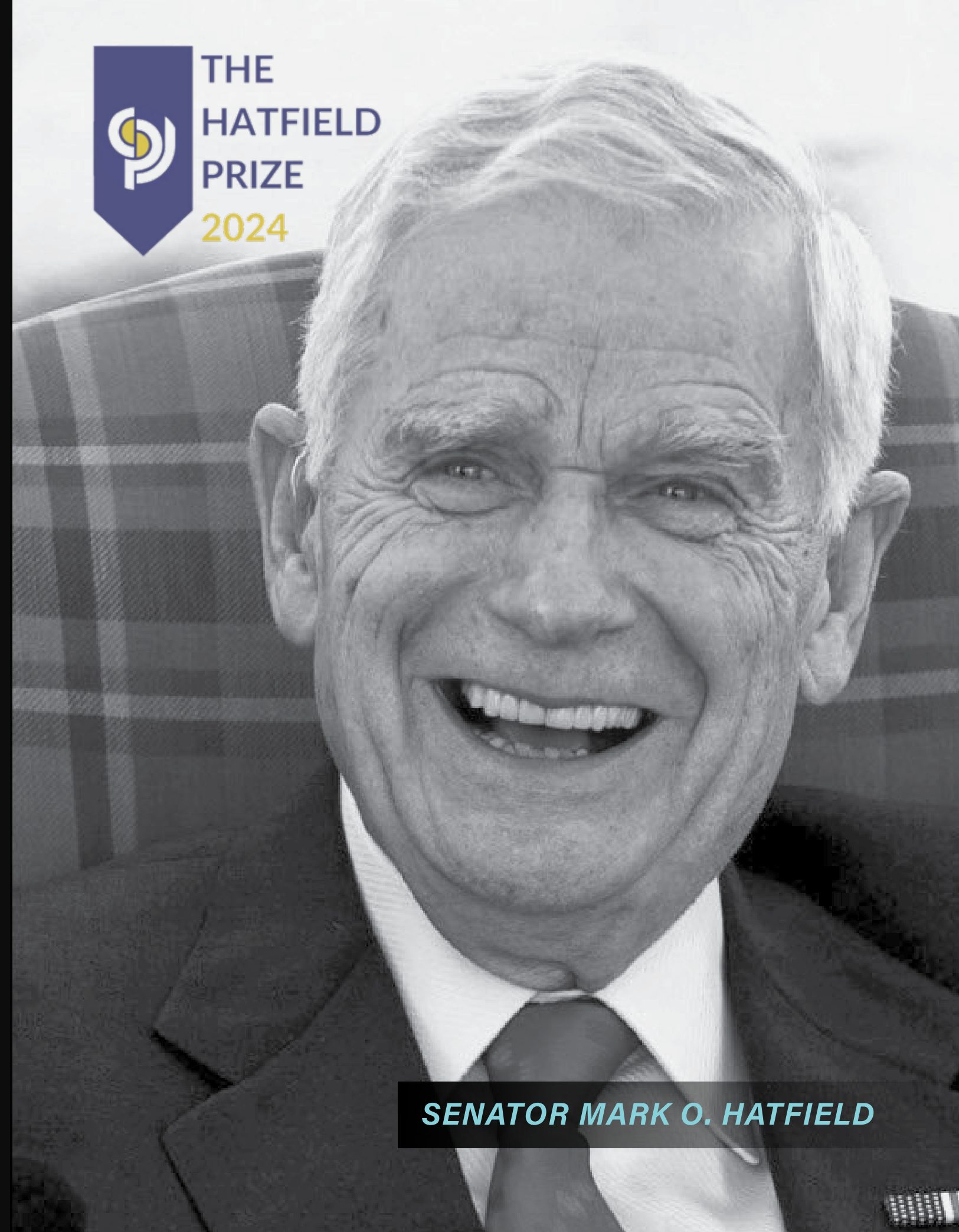
We are living through a season of tremendous change, not just for the CCCU and its institutions, as many articles in this magazine have explored, but also for our nation and the world. Senator Hatfield's legacy and vision live on through these changes in the work of the Mark O. Hatfield Leadership Award recipients, the research of the Hatfield Prize grant recipients, and, in a small way, through the well-worn and much-treasured Greek New Testament on my bookshelf. Each is an Ebenezer, a marker of progress made in a particular season by God's grace, that lives on when old chapters close, and new ones open.



Jacqueline Isaacs, MBA, is the guest editor of *ADVANCE Magazine*. She is the president of Bellwether Communications and formerly served as faculty for the American Studies Program.



READ THE FULL REPORT



SENATOR MARK O. HATFIELD



BUILDING A BETTER WACO: CTE PROGRAMS FOR THE FUTURE

By Jackson Boone and Dr. Colby Humphrey

My shirt is soaked with sweat after a long day framing on a residential construction crew in the sweltering Western Kentucky summer. I glance back on the day's work, the house's wooden exterior taking shape, before hopping into my truck. I think about how this journey began five years ago when I took a carpentry class at my high school's vocational center. That class turned into another, and then another. Before I knew it, I was cutting boards and hammering nails the summer before attending Baylor University to study mechanical engineering. The career and technical education (CTE) program at my high school was character-shaping for me, and it gave some of my friends, many of whom didn't want to go to college, opportunities to pursue work or an apprenticeship right after graduation.

Career and technical education programs offer courses for high school students across the country to earn industry certificates and credentials. This prepares them for immediate entrance into the workforce or a variety of postsecondary programs. While CTE pathways differ at every school, course offerings can include health science, manufacturing, construction technology, engineering technology, and much more. CTE provided a pathway to my first job after high school and left me with a lifelong skill in an industry with a high demand for skilled workers but also a lack of trained professionals. The need for vocational training for the next generation of workers has never been higher.

My initial introduction to CTE spurred my curiosity about the state of workforce development programs in Waco, TX. I wondered if Waco offered the same kinds of workforce education opportunities that were available back home in Kentucky. When Dr. Colby Humphrey, a political science lecturer at Baylor University, and I began a semester-long research project in January, we sought to analyze Waco's workforce development infrastructure through a threefold approach.

First, we analyzed the entire network of workforce programs offered in the community by a variety of organizations. Next, we determined the extent to which the current services were meeting the needs of Wacoans. Finally, we proposed an alternative method of understanding work that alters how we conduct workforce development, offering concrete and actionable suggestions to improve Waco's workforce development programs.

Our collaboration is part of the Hatfield Prize Reports and in coordination with the Center for Public Justice. Based on my past experience, I wanted to use the opportunity provided by CPJ to assess the support, funding, and effectiveness of workforce development programs by local governments, nonprofits, businesses, and education institutions in the area. Workforce development is a step toward ensuring quality pay and a better life for all Wacoans, and career

and technical education serves an essential role in developing Waco's workforce. By supporting CTE's funding and expansion across the education system, high school, and beyond, Waco ensures that everyone, no matter their income or background, has access to life-changing opportunities.

This approach not only fills a direct need in the community but also addresses a core problem many of the workforce development programs in Waco have: awareness and attendance. A recent report sponsored by multiple chambers of commerce across the state found that 54% of Texas jobs are "middle-skill," meaning they require more education than a high school degree but less than a bachelor's degree. Additionally, only 45% of Texans are trained in those jobs, meaning that there are 1.4 million job openings that require some middle-skill credentialing. The gap between job openings and people with the requisite skills to fill them only grows with each passing year, increasing the demand for skilled workers and, likewise, our responsibility to help students fill and hold these jobs.

In our conversations with stakeholders across the community, we found a wealth of workforce development organizations with a variety of programming. Local governments, nonprofits, educational institutions, and religious organizations across the city recognize the need in our backyard and have built infrastructure to support increasing the skills and training of Waco's workforce. However, many organizations told us about their difficulties in raising community awareness. Too often, high school students in Waco, if they graduate, receive their diploma without attending any type of postsecondary education or even entering the workforce. As time progresses, these former students become further removed from the support ecosystem that's in their community. The problem is not just underprivileged youth slipping through the cracks, but the isolation from workforce training resources these youth, now adults, currently experience.

The communication problem compounds as the people in dire need of retraining and upskilling are often the most disconnected from the services that can improve their livelihoods. Access to the internet, cell phones, television, or social media is not a guarantee, so modern modes of marketing and communication prove less effective. There is a wide swath of underprivileged youth that tend to be disconnected from secondary education and the workforce after graduation. The public education system and the nonprofit ecosystem can help bridge that gap for those students.

We are pleased to note that plans of this nature are already underway, as TSTC (Texas State Technical College) has formed partnerships with local high schools to promote CTE programs and encourage students to earn certifications after college. Similarly, the Waco Chamber of Commerce, in the fall of 2023, rolled out the Leadership, Education,

and Development (LEAD) program that pairs a community mentor with several high school students, encouraging them along their journey and offering advice and support during one of the most pivotal times in their lives. The value of personal relationships between students and mentors is incalculable and is a step in the right direction. But the work is far from over.

In our report, we recommend that civil society and local government increase their advocacy and awareness for CTE programs in schools as a viable, worthwhile alternative to a four-year college. We hope to see the LEAD program and others like it continue succeeding, scaling, and expanding. Programs like these have proved especially impactful for teenagers who cannot rely on a support system at home to provide safety and encouragement. This is not to say we should abandon the admirable goal of encouraging students to attend four-year colleges, but rather that students should be aware of their options. Mechanics, plumbers, electricians, nurses, carpenters, and many more CTE jobs serve essential functions in our community, and we simply don't have enough of them.

The problem lies not only in worker scarcity but also in a lack of people who see CTE education as a viable option for their future. Attending a four-year university doesn't have to be the mandated next step after high school. I say that as someone who is currently in four-year college but who also understands the value of learning a trade and becoming a skilled craftsman. Not only is it a rewarding and fulfilling experience, but it's a pathway toward a stable and well-paying job. Vocational education often takes less time and costs less than a four-year degree, making it a viable alternative for anyone considering post-high school plans different from a four-year college.

CTE education also directly impacts students' economic opportunities and the strength of a city's economy. According to a Department of Education report, 94 percent of students who had CTE concentrations graduated high school, while their non-CTE peers had an eight percent lower graduation rate. The report also found CTE students have a five percent higher employment rate eight years after graduation than those who were not in CTE programs. Additionally, those in CTE programs have higher median incomes eight years after graduation. These programs not only provide advantages for their students, but they also boost the community's economy by providing necessary services. Each of Waco's top five fastest growing occupations from 2018–2023 are jobs where certification and training in CTE pathways can begin in high school.

CTE education and certification are only part of a broader strategy that we outline in our report aimed at bettering Waco's workforce development strategy. We view workforce development as a vital piece in building a better Waco for all, prioritizing individual empowerment so everyone can reach their full potential, becoming self-sufficient, and contributing to the community in their own right.

Throughout this project, I have interviewed and met various folks from different backgrounds, each with a unique life story. Still, every one of them brimmed with pride about the place they call home. There are hundreds of children and teenagers brimming with opportunity and potential waiting to be released, just as there are hundreds of community leaders and everyday citizens ready to release it. Waco requires the public's support and awareness to finish the task before us.



Jackson Boone, a native of Calvert City, Kentucky, is currently studying mechanical engineering at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. He is a William Carey Crane Scholar and a Baylor Engaged Fellow, both programs which seek to understand how faith shapes learning and civic engagement. His small town background and previous experience as a residential carpenter has shaped his interest in workforce development efforts.



Dr. Colby Humphrey is lecturer at Baylor University, where his teaching surrounds American government and public policy. His current research focuses on infrastructure challenges and the role of federalism in addressing such issues, particularly related to broadband and telecommunications infrastructure.

Humphrey received a bachelor's degree in journalism from Baylor University, a master's in public service administration from Texas A&M University, and a Ph.D. in government from the University of Texas at Austin.



PITTSBURGH'S CLOUD OF WITNESSES: CARING FOR UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

By Megan Brock and Dr. Lisa Hosack

At just 15, Carlos fled his home in Honduras to seek medical treatment for an eye condition, a better education, and safety from gang-related violence in his hometown. Carlos crossed the U.S. border alone and was immediately arrested and held at a Texas detention facility. Soon he was transferred to a Miami shelter care facility for unaccompanied children that was his home for the next two and a half months. After 82 days, Carlos was placed under the care of his “sponsor”—an aunt in New Jersey.

He was excited to leave the strange and crowded facility in Miami and finally see a family member, even though he had only met his aunt once when he was very young. Now he continues to await a court hearing that will determine whether his status as an asylum seeker will be confirmed. If confirmed, he will have legal status in the U.S. but if denied, he will be deported.

Carlos’ story is true and hardly unique. Hundreds of parents—often unable to afford to pay for their own journey—send their children to the U.S. border, reliant upon the protection and policies of the U.S. federal government and praying their children will eventually find a better life. Providing care to this extremely vulnerable population is enormously challenging and requires the partnership and coordination of the federal government, states, nonprofit organizations, churches, and communities.

In 2023, the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR)—the federal agency charged with the care of this population—received 118,938 unaccompanied children (UC) into their care. While the reasons for children and adolescents crossing the border alone are multiple and complex, the vulnerability of this population must supersede any political arguments related to immigration. For the past nine months—as a part of my research for the Center for Public Justice’s Hatfield Prize—I have been researching the nature of UC care, specifically exploring the roles that Pennsylvania and my home city of Pittsburgh can play in this network.

After speaking with UC policy experts and the directors of numerous Pittsburgh nonprofits, I have concluded that my city and state, and plausibly other cities and states located far from the border, have the untapped potential to expand their role in UC care, taking pressure off overextended border states. In fact, I conclude that Pittsburgh and other similar places—though geographically far from the border and therefore not those that come immediately to mind when discussing immigration—are hospitable and well-resourced places where increased UC care would likely flourish.

Thankfully, there is a strong historical precedent for cities like Pittsburgh that can offer more services to UC. In 1997, the passage of the Flores Settlement Agreement signified a major improvement

in the care of UC by codifying requirements for ORR-contracted facilities including services related to UC’s physical, educational, and psychological needs. Under the Flores Settlement Agreement, ORR-contracted facilities must feed, shelter, clothe, educate, provide medical and mental health care, and work to expediently locate a familial sponsor or a stable foster home. These are places where UC live for approximately a month while trained social workers seek to place them with a sponsor.

However, there is currently only one ORR-contracted care shelter facility in Pittsburgh: Holy Family Institute. There are only two facilities in the entire state; the other one is near Philadelphia. Pittsburgh and similar cities could greatly enhance the overall UC network by empowering the existing network of social service providers to provide two types of care for unaccompanied minors. The first type of care would be additional ORR-contracted shelter care facilities.

The second type of care cities like Pittsburgh should support are foster homes where UC can be housed on a longer-term basis. Sometimes it is necessary to match a minor with a foster family when an acceptable sponsor is not located in the U.S. This may also happen if a child is classified as an unaccompanied refugee child who arrives legally from another country, but without a parent.

While encouraging local nonprofits to expand into UC care is a promising idea, some may wonder if Pittsburgh or other cities that might be further from the border would be the best places to expand UC care. My research actually found a vast nonprofit network in Pittsburgh that is effectively already assisting adult immigrants. While many of the organizations in this network do not officially exist for UC, their services are adjacent to those needed by UC. For example, many organizations have taught English, supported job placement, and provided pro bono legal assistance to immigrants for years.

In an interview I conducted with Monica Ruiz, executive director of Pittsburgh’s Casa San Jose, a Latino community center, I learned that many local nonprofits come into contact with UC and end up involved in their cases. Ruiz told me, “We can’t do the work ourselves. Latino Community Center [Pittsburgh’s other Latino community center] works with community [public] education where Casa San Jose does not.” Pittsburgh has many well-established foster care agencies including families that would likely have interest in fostering UC specifically.

Taking care of unaccompanied children in non-border states that already have the capacity to expand their resources to UC could mean that these children are given the opportunity to better their lives through a good education, better health care, safer neighborhoods, and a community of support. With these resources, UC can be given the chance to thrive and give back by participating in the economy and

entering the workforce. Without the support of local communities, these opportunities are not possible for a UC and could lead to instability in communities.

Fortunately, Pittsburgh is a northern city that is receptive to immigrants and can make UC flourishing a reality. In an article by *The Washington Post*, Pittsburgh Mayor Ed Gainey said, “We are not here to reject any immigration. As a matter of fact, we want to make this the most safe, welcoming, thriving place in America, and you can’t do that without immigration.” With the support of the city government, local nonprofits in the city have the opportunity to implement UC programs without fear of backlash.

Moving toward this reality starts with local nonprofits with the capacity to apply for ORR contracts, both in the areas of providing shelter care and/or foster homes. The ORR has three paths organizations can take to become contracted. Path one is for facilities that want to directly care for UC. Path two involves subsequent services or the providing of services for a temporary amount of time. Finally, path three is for those who want to give resources to UC without actually caring for them. These applications and contracting timelines depend on the path the agency is applying for and their eligibility.

The call to expand UC care also extends to churches, who have the unique ability to support local nonprofits by providing donations, volunteers, and spiritual role models for UC.

We see a trend in care facilities for UC being affiliated with religion. For instance, 40 percent of ORR-contracted facilities across the U.S. are faith-based. This significant finding is consistent with what we heard from the religious organizations we interviewed about the deep sense of calling they have to serve vulnerable populations like unaccompanied minors.

As Christina Staats, a mobilizer for Bibles, Badges, and Business at the National Immigration Forum, told us in an interview, “If we are going to have children in our system, we have to [do] due diligence.” How can we do this?

Individuals interested in going beyond public education can aid existing organizations dedicated to helping UC. Volunteering at a Latino community center, donating to a reputable nonprofit that works with UC, or getting involved in a local church ministry dedicated to helping UC are great areas to start. Opening one’s home to foster a UC is another way to help UC directly. Fostering UC gives the ORR more space to send UC to a proper and safe home. While fostering can be difficult at times, providing a safe, loving, family-like environment for a UC helps contribute to their well-being.

With a growing number of children entering the country unaccompanied by an adult, it is essential to spread out care locations to other parts of the U.S. rather than border states. Like Pittsburgh, many cities across the U.S. have the potential to provide a robust set of services for unaccompanied children, helping children just like Carlos, who was able to graduate high school and go on to work in manufacturing thanks to the support he received.



Megan Brock is a senior at Grove City College studying social work. She is from the Pittsburgh area and is passionate about working with children and teens in her community who suffer from trauma. Megan hopes to learn about the problems faced by youth in her community and help improve the lives of children through trauma-informed practice. Megan aspires to work with youth who struggle with behavior problems and to empower them toward future flourishing.



Dr. Lisa Hosack serves as an associate professor of social work and the Calderwood Assistant Dean at Grove City College in the rolling hills of western Pennsylvania. She teaches and researches in the areas of international child welfare, social welfare policy, and clinical social work. Dr. Hosack is married with three grown daughters and an accommodating cat named Felix.



REFORMING SNAP: WHAT'S AT STAKE IN THE NEW FARM BILL?

By Addison Ream and Dr. Keith L. Johnson

Roughly every five years, Congress debates changes to the omnibus Farm Bill, a multilayered law covering a plethora of agricultural and food programs. The first Farm Bill was passed in 1933 to bolster food supplies during the Great Depression and help keep food prices in check for average Americans.

Today, one of the largest programs in the Farm Bill is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, known as SNAP, which supports 41.1 million Americans every month by supplementing their grocery budgets. While SNAP benefits vary from family to family based on their unique circumstances, the program has a singular goal of helping Americans achieve essential nutrition by addressing food insecurity and hunger. These terms are not synonymous. Food insecurity is defined as “a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food.” On the other hand, hunger is “an individual-level physiological condition that may result from food insecurity.” While hunger may be related to food insecurity, not all those experiencing hunger are food insecure.

In recent debates about the Farm Bill, policymakers have disagreed over how supplemental the SNAP program should be. The Congressional Budget Office’s 10-year cost projection through fiscal year 2033 finds that \$1.2 trillion of the Farm Bill’s \$1.5 trillion budget is allocated toward SNAP. Some congresspeople find this cost too high.

In the spring of 2024, the House Agricultural Committee chair, Glen Thompson (R-PA), proposed amendments to revert SNAP to its funding in 2021 when the Thrifty Food Plan was adjusted only for inflation. The Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) is one of the USDA-created food plans that estimates the cost of a healthy, low-cost diet. The proposed legislation would draw on SNAP funds to source direct subsidies to large commodity farmers and consequently limit the Thrifty Food Plan. This would lead to a \$30 billion cut to SNAP over the next 10 years, with the decrease in benefits growing larger each subsequent year. If these proposals were implemented, it would be the largest cut to SNAP in almost 30 years.

The challenge with this proposal is that, even under current funding levels, the TFP is inadequate in providing a well-rounded diet for its participants. The plan includes a small quantity of “non-luxury healthy foods commonly eaten by U.S. households and includes foods in amounts that most U.S. households do not consume—such as quantities of milk and legumes that are well more than what people eat.” Furthermore, the Thrifty Food Plan assumes

food accessibility and food affordability without accounting for different levels of food access and costs of living across the country.

Many researchers fear that Rep. Thompson’s proposed cuts would undermine food security in America, especially in light of economic challenges to SNAP brought about by the pandemic. Northwestern University economist, Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach, has researched the effects of the ending of pandemic-era supplemental SNAP benefits. She and her team have found that “the end of the emergency programs could cause hunger—as defined by the share of households who say they sometimes or often did not have enough to eat over the previous week—to go up by about 10 percent.”

But many in Congress worry that SNAP is inefficient. Rep. Mark Alford (R-MO) argues that the program overpays by millions of dollars every day while actually undermining the health of its recipients through the purchase of sugary drinks, which are the second most purchased item sold through SNAP. “The truth is that as the number of SNAP recipients has grown, our healthiness levels [have] fallen here in America,” he said. But in reality, SNAP offers an average of only \$6.30 per person/per day across all three meals—which hardly seems like overpaying in the current economy. And to claim that just because sugary drinks are the second most purchased item through SNAP, it is the cause of the drop in healthiness levels in America, is to commit the post hoc ergo propter hoc fallacy. Researchers have shown the opposite. Studies show that SNAP involvement is directly correlated with lower rates of long-term health complications such as obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease, and diabetes, particularly for children.

At the same time, researchers at Children’s HealthWatch found that when a family experiences an abrupt change or end to their benefits or household income—such as during the abrupt rollback of benefits in the early months of 2023—their children are more likely to experience food insecurity.

In an era of inflation, Americans must decide which costs are worth paying. Despite the large, proposed changes to SNAP in the new Farm Bill, the beauty of the Farm Bill is that it must receive bipartisan support to become a law. With public trust in government decisions steadily declining and a heated election cycle on the horizon, policymakers must work together in order to aid in the well-being of American families. The data shows that the social and physical benefits of SNAP to American families are tremendous. A reduction in funding to the SNAP program would negatively harm the health and well-being of millions of children.



Addison Ream is a senior at Wheaton College (IL) studying biblical and theological studies with a double minor in social work and German. She is a student employee for the college’s Center for Vocation and Career and the Office of Undergraduate Admissions. Addison’s professional aspirations reside in pursuing justice in the division of social policy, particularly pertaining to child and family welfare. Her long-term career aspirations now reside at the intersection of policy and advocacy, specifically utilizing research as a means of fostering social change.



Dr. Keith L. Johnson is professor of theology and chair of the undergraduate biblical and theological studies department at Wheaton College in Illinois. His recent books include *The Essential Karl Barth: A Reader and Commentary* (Baker Academic, 2020) and *Theology as Discipleship* (IVP Academic, 2016). He also has co-edited several volumes, including *Kenosis: The Self-Emptying of Christ in Scripture and Theology* (Eerdmans, 2023) and *Balm in Gilead: A Theological Dialogue with Marilynne Robinson* (IVP Academic, 2019). He received the Senior Teaching Award at Wheaton in 2022.



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The Hatfield Prize is awarded annually to three Christian student-faculty pairs. Each pair conducts research on a social policy that impacts the well-being of children, families, and communities. This semester-long research project culminates in a policy report published by the Center for Public Justice. Students receive a \$5,000 award; faculty advisors receive a \$1,500 award.

For more information on the Center for Public Justice Hatfield Prize, visit www.cpjustice.org/resources-for-you/students-and-scholars/awards/.

LOST IN TRANSITION

LESSONS FROM THE MOST DISASTROUS & SUCCESSFUL MINISTRY SUCCESSIONS



A book review with Dr. Paul Percy

Lost in Transition: Lessons from the Most Disastrous & Successful Ministry Successions is a guide for those in leadership facing a ministry transition, whether they are the outgoing leader, the incoming leader, or part of the team shepherding the transition. Steve Woodworth, CEO of the Christian marketing agency Masterworks and a former senior leader at World Vision, draws on his own experiences as well as dozens of other firsthand stories of ministry successions—both effective and catastrophic—to create the blueprint for a successful succession.

In his review, Paul Matthew Percy, Ph.D., examines how the book can help Christian colleges and universities that face transitions of their own—particularly at the presidential level—to navigate the unknown so that campus leaders and the entire campus community are set up for success.



As in higher education broadly, Christian college campuses face increasing presidential transitions. Though it was not uncommon a generation ago for a president to lead an institution for a decade or more, today's presidents have often occupied the role for less than six years. While new leadership is natural and often welcome in the life of an institution, managing the presidential transition is a challenge even in the best of times. (For CCCU institutions facing such moments, alongside the CCCU itself, see page 6). Given this environment, Steve Woodworth's *Lost in Transition: Lessons from the Most Disastrous and Successful Ministry Successions* (Kingdom Life Publishing, 2024) offers applications to our own institutions.

Woodworth himself is a 40-year veteran of leadership in faith-based institutions, including World Vision and Masterworks, a marketing organization dedicated to aiding hundreds of Christian organizations to achieve their mission. "There's a dire need for change in how ministry successions are handled," Woodworth writes. "Too many transitions have ended disastrously, and most knowledgeable leaders agree that only half go well."

Woodworth gathered stories to research what made a difference between success and failure in leadership transitions. Based on those observations, he develops five key principles that make or break a successful succession: 1) boards don't know what they don't know; 2) culture is king; 3) humility is the secret ingredient; 4) respect your outgoing leader; and 5) clear communication makes it all go.



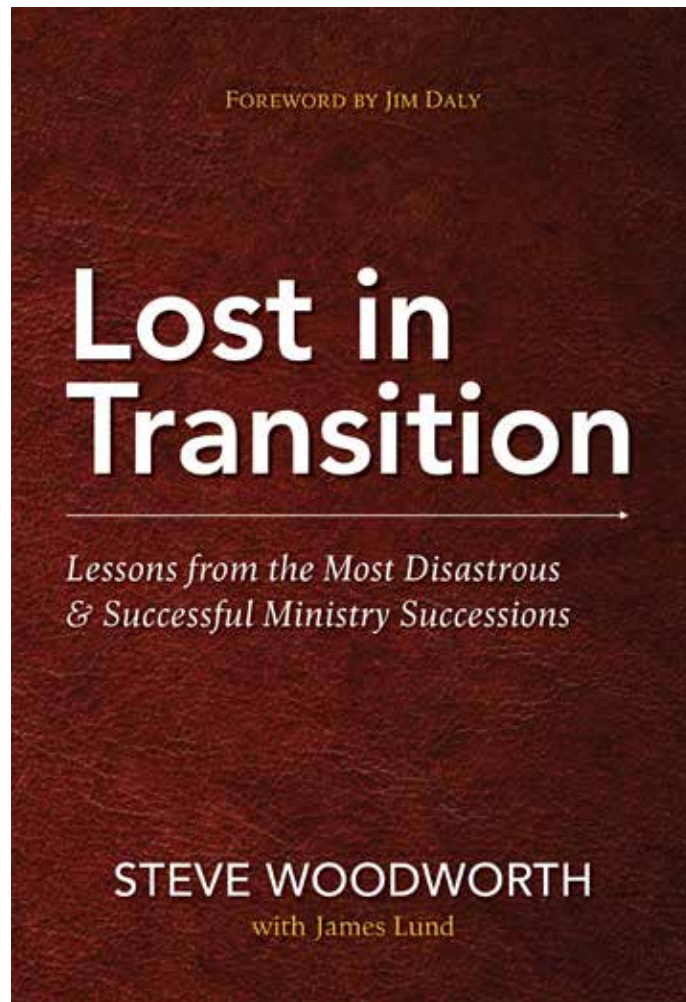
DR. PAUL PERCY
Former Interim President,
Carson-Newman University

Paul Matthew Percy, Ph.D., has held a wide variety of teaching and leadership roles in higher education, including interim president of Carson-Newman University (Jefferson City, Tennessee) and provost and vice president of academic affairs at King University (Bristol, Tennessee).



STEVE WOODWORTH
Chief Executive Officer,
Masterworks

With over 40 years devoted to advancing Christian organizations, Steve Woodworth brings a wealth of expertise in marketing, management, and organizational development. He steered World Vision's direct marketing and donor services through a decade of annual double-digit growth in the 1980s and 1990s. Since joining Masterworks in 1992, Steve has been instrumental in establishing it as the premier marketing agency dedicated to aiding hundreds of Christian organizations in achieving their mission. Steve also gives back as a volunteer on boards, as a convener of industry leaders, and by continuing to lead the Communications Working Group for The Lausanne Movement.



Since cultural fit is such a big factor in successful leadership transitions, hiring from within the organization has tremendous advantages. While this approach isn't always the right move if an institution is struggling, Woodworth argues that doing so in a healthy organization offers the best odds for success.

HUMILITY IS THE SECRET INGREDIENT

Any finalist considered to succeed the current president will be someone highly successful and confident, but too often a measure of arrogance accompanies that confidence. Therefore, incoming leaders need to guard against pride and instead approach their leadership role with humility. As Jesus told his disciples in Mark 10, "Whoever would be great among you must be your servant." This humility is necessary for both the outgoing and incoming leaders; Woodworth's research shows the secret sauce for successful leadership transitions is when everyone comes with a humble attitude. Doing so allows the outgoing leader to place both the institution and the incoming leader in the best position for the future, even as the incoming leader begins with a humility unthreatened by their predecessor's success, focusing instead on what's best for the entire campus community.

RESPECT YOUR OUTGOING LEADER

If the board and incoming president fail to honor the departing leader and his colleagues, there is certain to be trouble. A loved, retiring president still has much to offer regarding relationships he or she built over the years serving the organization. Those relationships are critical to the continued success of the organization and its new leader.

CLEAR COMMUNICATION MAKES IT ALL GO

As discussed already, boards are often well-meaning but not well-informed; there is a danger that the search process could happen in a vacuum. For the best chance of success, clear communication needs to be in place long before the transition begins and should include all constituencies. Failing to conduct a search in an open and transparent process will result in failing to learn things the board needs to know to hire the best new president. It is wiser to keep a wide group in the loop and rely on key members of the faculty, staff, students, and other friends of the university.

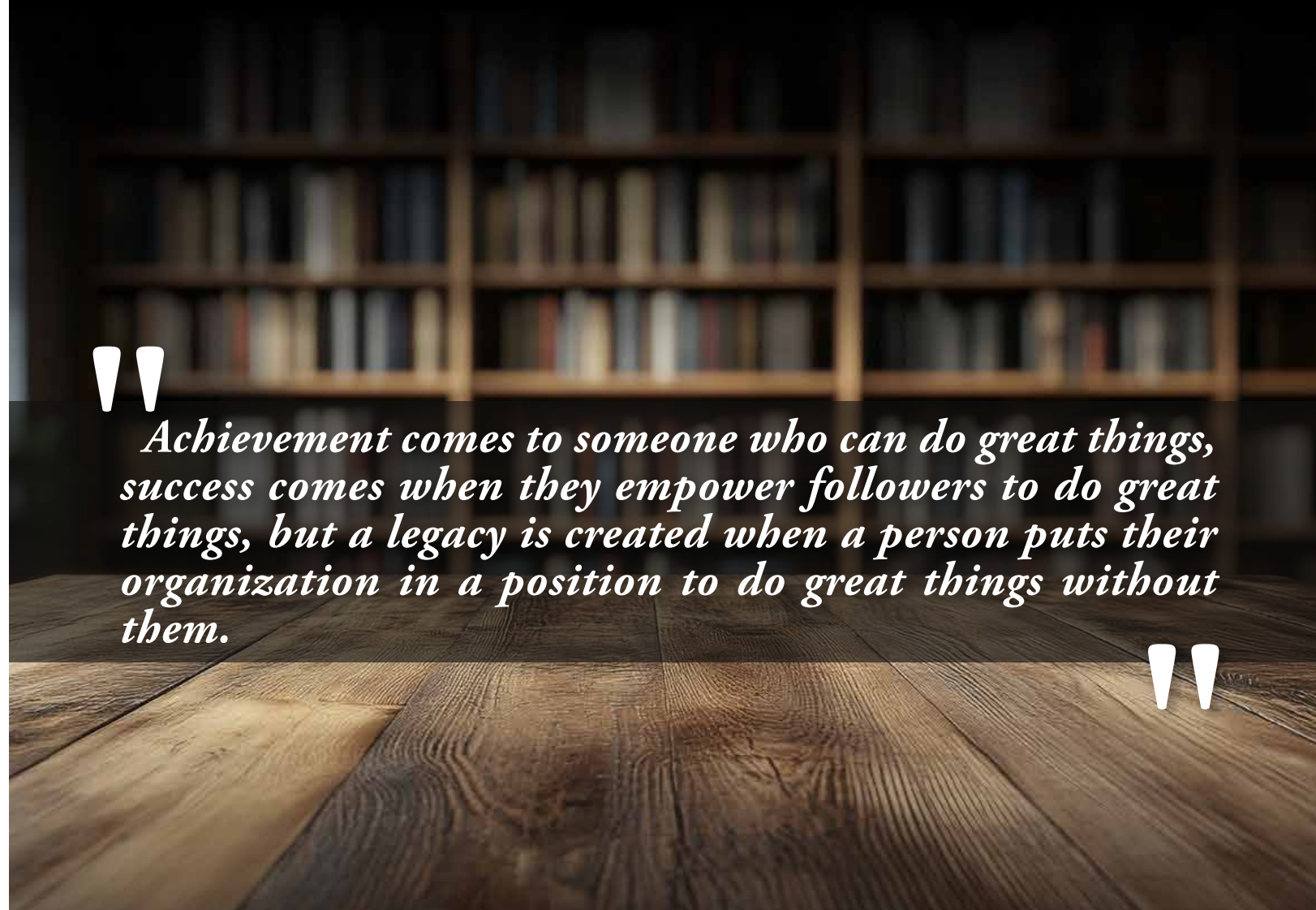
Woodworth ends his book with a principle from John Maxwell's *21 Laws of Irrefutable Leadership*: Achievement comes to someone who can do great things, success comes when they empower followers to do great things, but a legacy is created when a person puts their organization into a position to do great things without them. This is what Woodworth's book aims to help all Christian institutions do. As he writes in his conclusion, "Leadership transition requires thoughtful and timely planning, developing potential successors, identifying the right person, supporting both the incoming and outgoing leaders with humility and respect during and after the transition, and graciously embracing our new roles when the transition is complete." 📖

BOARDS DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY DON'T KNOW

While boards of Christian higher education institutions consist of successful, high-achieving members who care about the campus community, they aren't there for the day-to-day operations. Therefore, they need to consider the possibility that they are not as informed as they think they are and to rely on the feedback of other trusted sources. At best, board members review and make decisions on the direction of the university two or three times a year. Woodworth quotes Rich Stearns, former CEO of World Vision: "Boards don't fully understand the needs of the organization; they don't know what they don't know so they make mistakes and hire people who don't fit." A wise board searching for a new leader should lean on the current president and executive leadership team who have invested years working in the trenches every day.

CULTURE IS KING

The incoming president needs to understand the culture of the university or college they are about to lead. They need to appreciate and learn how things are done and work within the university's culture to generate trust and rapport with the current leadership team, faculty, staff, and students (and, for many CCCU institutions, the small community where the school is located). When new presidents don't appreciate and consider the nuances of the organizational culture, they are bound to encounter trouble.



Achievement comes to someone who can do great things, success comes when they empower followers to do great things, but a legacy is created when a person puts their organization in a position to do great things without them.



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By President David Hoag, Ph.D.

In times of change, it is ever more important to center your sights on things that matter in life. As writer Peter Brooks stated, “We live immersed in narrative, recounting and reassessing the meaning of our past actions, anticipating the outcome of our future projects, situating ourselves at the intersection of stories not completed.” In Christian higher education, this is especially true as we navigate new stories, new messages, and... new leadership. During this season as I am immersed in a new role, I reflect on ways to reinforce values and grow through new experiences while navigating the complexity of change.

As someone who loves to spend time on the water, I have discovered parallels between boating and life. In boating, safe navigation means identifying channel markers and relying on beacons to guide you home. In my experience in Christian higher education, these principles apply just as well. My love for Jesus Christ and my faith serve as the stars that guide me. I trust that the Lord and biblical truth are my anchors. No matter the change, there is peace in that knowledge as I set sail as the eighth president of the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities.

CHANNEL MARKERS

If you have ever been on a large body of water like the Atlantic Ocean or the Gulf of Mexico, you may have seen red and green markers. These markers indicate where the channel is, or the “safe passage.” Channels are designated paths in the water that are deep enough for boats to travel safely. It is important to look for the channels marked with red and green buoys or day markers that provide a clear, safe route for navigation. These markers help you avoid obstacles like sandbars, rocks, and other underwater hazards that cause damage—or even sink you. CCCU campuses serve as channel markers, equipped to steer students away from the world’s tempting distractions and help them stay rooted in the faithful channel of the Christian mission. Shortcuts in the water, in life, and in leadership can be deceptive. They omit necessary steps in the journey and may take you along perilous routes. There is no shortcut in providing a holistic, Christian education. The spiritual journey in Christian higher education is a serious commitment to an authentic, purposeful life grounded in faith.

While societal or cultural distractions attempt to change our pace and cause us to veer off course, Christian education serves as a guide. It reminds students to stay on a faithful route and not let anything push them out of the channel.

LIGHTHOUSES

I grew up just a few miles from Lake Erie in Northern Ohio. Lighthouses stand watch all along the coast of Lake Erie, where they play a crucial role in maritime safety by guiding and protecting vessels on the water. They provide navigational aids, warnings, and reference points, especially in challenging or near-hazardous areas. The primary function of these lighthouses is to shine their light brightly so that it is visible from exceptionally long distances. They assist with navigation to help you know your location and avoid danger.

A few times I have been out on the water as a classic storm begins, especially late on a Florida summer afternoon. While heading back to the home port, it is vital to look for markers and lights to guide you safely back to shore. Lighthouses serve as beacons of hope for sailors in the midst of a storm.

No matter the weather, these lighthouses stand firm, through peaceful, blue-sky days and turbulent storms. They are a beacon of hope. When I reflect on safety, stability, and hope, I think of our Christian colleges and universities. Despite the challenges in our world, they shine the light of Jesus.

In Matthew 5:14-16, Jesus says, “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Now more than ever, Christian colleges and universities need to shine as beacons of hope, letting faith guide us in our divided world. As we embark on this new academic year, I challenge you not to follow distractions, to stay in the channel as you navigate the obstacles, and the opportunities, before you. While navigating this year, make sure you and your institution shine the light of Jesus. Be that beacon of hope to your community and those around you. May God bless you as you do His work in ministry this year. 🙏

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